AN
ATTEMPT
TO EXPLAIN THE
PRINCIPLES
OF THE
BRITISH CONSTITUTION;
TO TRACE THE CAUSES WHICH COMBINED TO BRING ABOUT THE
TRIENNIAL AND SEPTENNIAL ACTS;
TO ENUMERATE SOME OF THE
PERNICIOUS EFFECTS PRODUCED BY THE LATTER;
AND TO SHEW THE
INDISPENSIBLE NECESSITY OF A REPEAL OF THAT ACT,
AND AN
EQUAL REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE IN PARLIAMENT,
IN ORDER TO PRESERVE THE
BALANCE OF THE THREE BRANCHES OF THE LEGISLATURE,
SO ESSENTIAL TO THE CONSTITUTION.

BY JAMES GREEN,
Lieutenant in his Majesty's Marine Forces.

SALUS POPULI SUPREMA LEX ESTO.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

TO THE

PUBLIC.

POLYBIUS, in his excellent diſſertation on Government, explains the principles by which different governments roſe to the ſummit of their power and grandeur; and proves, that they ſunk to ruin by a more or leſs rapid progreſs, in proportion as they receded more or leſs from the principles on which they were originally founded.

Whoever reads with attention the hiſtory of Great-Britain, will find, that ſeveral innovations have been made in its form of Government ſince the Revolution; and that, by paſſing the Septennial Act, that bane of our State, we have not only infringed the rights of the People, but receded, in a very conſiderable degree, from the principles of the Conſtitution, as re-eſtabliſhed at that memorable æra.

It is the deſign of the following Treatiſe (which I have ventured to offer, ſenſible as I am of its imperfections, to the indulgence of

the Public) to explain the principles upon which the Britiſh Government is founded; to trace the cauſes which brought about the Triennial and Septennial Acts; to enumerate a few of the many evils produced by the latter; and make ſome obſervations on our expenſive and ruinous European continental wars,—and our diſtant, ideal, and pernicious conqueſts,—abetted by the majority of a Septennial Parliament; to ſhew that the Septennial Bill is an encroachment upon that elective power which is the baſis of the People's liberty, and a dangerous innovation in our ſyſtem of Government; and that this Act, aided by the partial repreſentation of the People in Parliament, the eſtabliſhment of the Civil Liſt, the increaſe of the Public Revenue, the accumulation of the National Debt, the augmentation of the Navy and Army, and the Bill for the better regulation of the Eaſt-India Company's affairs, hath given a power, unknown in former times, to the Miniſtry—a power that may prove more dangerous to the Conſtitution and to the liberties of the Subject, than thoſe Prerogatives formerly poſſeſſed or claimed by the Crown.

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In tracing the cauſes which led to the Triennial and Septennial Acts, I found it neceſſary to lay before the reader the ſeveral changes of the Miniſtry, and the ſtate of the Nation, as well as the ſtate of the Whig and Tory Parties, from the Revolution to the acceſſion of King George the Iſt; and have endeavoured to develope the different views and intereſts of thoſe turbulent Factions that have long divided this Kingdom, and, in their turn, engroſſed the Adminiſtration and Legiſlative Power,—which, I flatter myſelf, will be entertaining to many of my readers.

Though I am well aware I can throw little new light upon this ſubject; yet, as my principal motive for writing was a ſincere attachment to the Conſtitution and welfare of my country, it ſhall be my ſtudy to avail myſelf of the labours of others; to ſelect, arrange, and deliver their ſentiments, as well as my own, with candour, but, at the ſame time, with that freedom which is the birth-right of every Briton: And however widely I may differ in politics with the leaders of the Rival Parties which at preſent divide

vide the Kingdom, I hope I ſhall not on that account be accuſed of diſloyalty. I love my Sovereign, whoſe many virtues have endeared him to his people; I eſteem the Heir Apparent, who is endowed with every amiable accompliſhment, and poſſeſſed of a thorough knowledge of the Conſtitution of his country, and who, I hope, at ſome future period, will ſway the Britiſh Sceptre with dignity to himſelf, and advantage to the Empire; but I revere the Conſtitution of Old England,—and if it muſt periſh, an abſolute Monarchy is, in my opinion, to be preferred either to a tyrannical Ariſtocracy, or a wild Democracy.

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THE *PRINCIPLES* OF THE BRITISH CONSTITUTION EXPLAINED.

THERE are three principal forms of Government; the Republican, Monarchical, and Deſpotic.

A Republican Government is that in which the body, or only a part of the people, is poſſeſſed of the ſupreme power; a Monarchical, that in which a ſingle perſon governs by fixt and eſtabliſhed laws; a Deſpotic Government, that in which a ſingle perſon, without law and without rule, directs every thing by his own will and caprice. The moſt celebrated writers of antiquity, as Plato, Ariſtotle, Polybius, and Plutarch, give the preference to the Monarchi-

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cal form, as including the moſt advantages with the feweſt inconveniences *. But all agree that the ſafety and happineſs of the whole community ought to be the only end of all Government.

The Britiſh Government is compoſed of a due mixture of Monarchy, Ariſtocracy, and Democracy, veſted in their Repreſentatives, King, Lords, and Commons; to whom the ſupreme legiſlative authority belongs.

* That judicious hiſtorian Polybius ſays, that the beſt form of Government is that which is compoſed of a due mixture of Monarchy, Ariſtocracy, and Democracy. He affirms that his aſſertion may not only be proved from reaſon, but from the evidence of facts; and cites the Spartan Conſtitution in proof, which was modelled upon that very plan by Lycurgus. He adds too, that to perpetuate the duration of his Government, he united the peculiar excellencies of all the beſt Governments in one form, that neither of the three parts, by ſwelling beyond its juſt bounds, might ever be able to deviate into its original inborn defects; but that whilſt each power was mutually drawn back by the oppoſite attraction of the other two, neither power might ever preponderate, but the balance of Government continue ſuſpended in its true equipoiſe. He eſteems this plan of Government, which Lycurgus eſtabliſhed at Sparta, the moſt perfect, and propoſes it as a general model worthy the imitation of every community; and he remarks, that the Spartans, by adhering to their plan, preſerved their liberty longer than any other nation of the known world.

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The executive power is veſted by our Conſtitution in a ſingle perſon, King or Queen; for it is indifferent to which ſex the Crown deſcends.

The Crown is, by various ſtatutes and conſtitutional cuſtom, rendered hereditary; and the ſettlements, by virtue of which the King governs, are conditional: He may forfeit his right to allegiance, as undeniably and effectually, as the ſubject may forfeit his right to protection.

The King, who is inveſted with the higheſt prerogative, has all the honours and all the ſplendor of Majeſty; and is only limited where power might become tyranny, and where he might be capable of injuring himſelf or his people. By this means, his ſubjects reap all the advantages, without any of the evils, of a Monarchical Government. "A King," ſays Lord Bolingbroke, "has a divine right to govern well. A divine right to govern ill, is an abſurdity; and to aſſert it, is blaſphemy."

The King of Great-Britain receives all his power and authority from the laws; and there-

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fore, at his acceſſion to the Throne, he binds himſelf by a ſolemn oath to make them the rule of his conduct; and before he receives one oath of allegiance, is obliged to ſwear to obſerve the Great Charter of the Engliſh liberties; and thus, at his coronation, renews the original compact between the King and his ſubjects. He then becomes the head of the State, and is himſelf ſubject to none but God and the laws, to which he is as much bound to pay obedience as the meaneſt ſubject.

The Sovereign, by virtue of his executive power, can make war and peace; ſend and receive Ambaſſadors; make alliances and treaties with foreign Princes; levy armies, and fit out fleets, for the defence of his kingdom, the annoyance of his enemies, or the ſuppreſſion of rebellions. He grants commiſſions to his officers, both by ſea and land, and revokes them at pleaſure; he diſpoſes of all magazines, caſtles, &c.; ſummons the Parliament to meet; and when met, ~~adjourns,~~ prorogues, or diſſolves it at pleaſure; and refuſes his aſſent to any bill, though it hath paſſed both Houſes.

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He hath the right of chuſing his own Council, and of nominating all the great officers of the State and of the Houſehold. He is ſupreme head of the Church, and appoints the Archbiſhops and Biſhops. He alone can convene, prorogue, or diſſolve the aſſembly of the Clergy; and his aſſent is neceſſary to the validity of their acts or canons. He is the ſource of all judicial power in the empire. He is the chief of all the tribunals; and the Judges are only his ſubſtitutes: Every thing is tranſacted in his name: The judgments muſt be ſealed with his ſeal, and executed by his officers. He is the ſuperintendent of commerce; and has the power of coining money, and giving currency to foreign coin. He is univerſal proprietor of the whole kingdom: His perſon is ſacred and inviolable: He can pardon all offences; and is the fountain of all honour, from whom all degrees of Nobility ~~and Knighthood~~ are derived.

In fine, he is the guardian of the rights, the laws, the liberties, and the intereſts of the people; and the whole of theſe executive powers is abſolutely neceſſary, to enable him

to carry on the Government with effect. "Theſe conſtitutional powers," ſays Judge Blackſtone, "are not perſonal as to the King, but attached to the Crown, inalienable and indiviſible from it, and are not given for the benefit of a ſingle perſon, but conferred by the people to be uſed for their advantage and ſafety."

"The Conſtitution," ſays Bolingbroke, will be conſidered by a Patriot King as one law, conſiſting of two tables, containing the rule of his Government, and the meaſure of his ſubjects obedience; or as one ſyſtem, compoſed of different parts and powers, but all duly proportioned to one another, and conſpiring by their harmony to the perfection of the whole. He will make one, and but one diſtinction between his rights and thoſe of his people: He will look upon his to be a truſt, and theirs a property. He will diſcern that he can have a right to no more than is truſted to him by the Conſtitution; and that his people, who had an original right to the whole by the law of nature, can have the ſole indefeaſible

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right to any part,—and really have ſuch a right to that part which they reſerved to themſelves. In fine, the Conſtitution will be reverenced by him as the law of God and of man; the force of which binds the King as much as the meaneſt ſubject, and the reaſon of which binds him much more."

Our anceſtors having thus veſted the whole of the executive Government in the Crown, and made it the inalienable and indiviſible attribute of one perſon alone, they have applied the whole remaining powers of the Conſtitution to reſtrain it within its proper bounds.

In all free States, every man who is ſuppoſed a free agent, ought to be his own governor; ſo the legiſlative power ſhould reſide in the whole body of the people. But ſince this is impoſſible in large States, and in ſmall ones is ſubject to many inconveniences, it is fit the people ſhould act by their Repreſentatives, what they cannot act by themſelves. The great advantage of Repreſentatives, ſays an eminent writer *, is their being capable of diſcuſſing af-

* See Monteſquieu's Spirit of Laws.

fairs:

fairs: For this the people collectively are extremely unfit, which is one of the greateſt inconveniences of a Democracy.

One great fault there was in moſt of the ancient Republics, that the people had a right to active reſolutions, ſuch as require ſome execution, a thing for which they are abſolutely incapable. They ought to have no hand in the Government, but for the chuſing of Repreſentatives, which is within their reach: For though few can tell the exact degree of men's capacities, yet there are none but are capable of knowing in general, whether the perſon they chuſe is better qualified than moſt of his neighbours.

Neither ought the repreſentative body to be choſen for active reſolutions, for which it is not ſo fit; but for the enacting of laws, or to ſee whether the laws already enacted be duly executed, a thing they are very capable of, and which none indeed but themſelves can properly perform.

In every State, there are always perſons diſtinguiſhed by birth, riches, and honours,—advantages which give them ſuch a conſiderable weight

weight in the Government, that, were they to be confounded with the multitude, they would have no intereſt in ſupporting liberty; for as moſt of the popular reſolutions would be made to their prejudice, the public liberty would be their ſlavery: The ſhare they are therefore allowed in the Legiſlature, is in proportion to the intereſt they have in the State; and from hence it is that they form a body of Nobles, that has a right to put a ſtop to the enterprizes of the people, to counterbalance the right which the people enjoy, of putting a ſtop to their encroachments.

The legiſlative power is therefore committed to the body of the Nobles, and to the body choſen to repreſent the people, which have each their aſſemblies and deliberations apart, each their ſeparate views and intereſts: But here there is this eſſential difference,—for while the individuals who compoſe the Houſe of Commons enjoy their power but for a limited time, and can only be reſtored by new powers given them by their conſtituents, the privileges enjoyed by the Members of the Houſe of Lords are in their own nature hereditary: And this

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is the more neceſſary, as their high prerogatives render them ſubject to popular envy; and conſequently their privileges muſt, in a free State, be always in danger. The only diſadvantage that can ariſe from this is, that, as their power is hereditary, they might be tempted to purſue their own intereſt to the prejudice of the people; and therefore to prevent this, where they might receive the greateſt pecuniary advantages from being corrupt, as in the caſe of granting ſupplies, they have only the power of rejecting, while the Commons alone have that of reſolving.

Thus our civil Conſtitution, or form of Government, is the work of a wiſe and brave people, who, conſidering that all power was derived from them, and was to be ſubſervient to their happineſs, lodged it in the hands of three Eſtates, which were to be a mutual ſupport and a mutual check to each other, and yet ſo ordered, that the intereſt of each is beſt promoted by each confining itſelf within its proper bounds.

Parliaments, in ſome ſhape, are of as high antiquity as the Saxon Government in this iſland;

iſland; and have ſubſiſted, in their preſent form, above five hundred years.

The Saxons, a German nation, who ſubdued Britain about the middle of the fifth century, ſeem to have been diſtinguiſhed both by their manners and political inſtitutions, and to have carried to the higheſt pitch the virtues of valour and love of liberty; and it is to them that we are indebted for our form of Government.

The Saxon *Wittena-Gemott*, or Parliament, conſiſted of three Eſtates,—the King, the Adelings or Nobles, and the Repreſentatives of the people, annually elected by the *frilingi*, or freeborn, who made the body of the Saxon commonalty. The Knights of the ſhires were annually elected by the rural inhabitants of the ſhires, paying their ~~ſhot~~, and bearing their lot. The Burgeſſes, who repreſented the people of the towns, were elected by every reſident inhabitant, that paid his ſhot, and bore his lot. Thus the people were parties to the making and to the executing all the general laws of the kingdom. They ſhared the legiſlative power; were joined to the Lords in the adminiſtration

of juſtice; and no magiſtrate or officer could exerciſe juriſdiction, nor authority over them, no not eccleſiaſtical, without their conſent and election. The *Comites ex Plebe*, who were choſen for the adminiſtration of juſtice, made one rank among the Saxon commonalty. The *Cuſtodes Pagani*, ſuch as had an helmet, a coat of mail, and a gilt ſword, for their ordinary arms, whether they fought on foot or on horſe-back, made another rank; and the plain *Pagani*, or *Ceorles*, made the loweſt. Theſe are the ſources, from which all diſtinctions of rank and degree, that exiſt at this day amongſt us, have flowed: Theſe are the general principles of all our liberties.

The Parliament of Great-Britain conſiſts of the King, and the three Eſtates of the realm, —the Lords Spiritual, the Lords Temporal, and the Commons. The King and theſe three Eſtates together form the Great Corporation, or Body Politic, of the kingdom; of which the King is ſaid to be *caput*, *principium*, *et finis*: For they are aſſembled by his writs; and, upon their coming together, he meets them, either in perſon or by repreſentation, without which

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there can be no beginning of a Parliament; and he alſo has alone the power of diſſolving them.

The Lords Spiritual conſiſt of two Archbiſhops and twenty-four Biſhops. The Lords Temporal conſiſt of all the Peers of the realm, (the Biſhops not being in ſtrictneſs held to be ſuch, but merely Lords of Parliament). Some of the Peers ſit by deſcent, as do all ancient Peers; ſome by creation, as do all the new-made ones; others, ſince the Union with Scotland, by election, which is the caſe of the Sixteen Peers, who repreſent the body of the Scotch Nobility. The number of Peers is indefinite, and may be increaſed at will by the power of the Crown.

The Commons conſiſt of all ſuch men, of any property in the kingdom, as have not ſeats in the Houſe of Lords; every one of which has a voice in Parliament, either perſonally or by his repreſentatives.

The counties are repreſented by Knights, elected by the proprietors of lands: The cities and boroughs are repreſented by Citizens and Burgeſſes. The number of Engliſh Repreſentatives is 513, and of Scotch 45; in all, 558.

But as our anceſtors formed their Government upon the principles of liberty, and the common rights and intereſts of mankind, they never gave up their natural liberty, nor delegated their power of making laws, for a longer time than one year *; being ſenſible, that every prolongation of this term is, in its degree, unſafe for the people; and that it weakens their ſecurity, and endangers liberty by the very powers given for its preſervation.

Thus the annual elective power of the people was the firſt principle of our Government, and forms the moſt eſſential part of the legiſlative authority.

Theſe then are the conſtituent parts of our Parliament,—the King, the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and the Commons;—parts, of which each is ſo neceſſary, that the conſent of all three is required to make a new, or repeal an old law.

In order to prevent the miſchiefs that might ariſe by placing ſo extenſive an authority in

* This ancient law was confirmed by a ſtatute of Edward the Third, which declares, that Parliaments ſhould be holden every year, or oftener, if need be, for the redreſs of divers miſchiefs and grievances, that daily happen.

hands that are either incapable, or elſe improper, to manage it, it is provided, that no one ſhall ſit or vote in either Houſe of Parliament, unleſs he be twenty-one years of age. To prevent innovations in Religion and Government, it is enacted, that no member ſhall vote or ſit in either Houſe, till he hath, in the preſence of the Houſe, taken the oaths of allegiance, ſupremacy, and abjuration; and ſhall have ſubſcribed and repeated the declaration againſt tranſubſtantiation, the invocations of ſaints, and the ſacrifice of the maſs. To prevent dangers that may ariſe to the kingdom from foreign attachments, connections, or dependencies, it is enacted, that no alien, born out of the dominions of the Crown of Great-Britain, even though he be naturalized, ſhall be capable of being a member of either Houſe of Parliament.

Some of the moſt important privileges of the members of either Houſe are,—privilege of ſpeech, of perſon, and of their domeſtics.

The peculiar laws and cuſtoms of the Houſe of Commons relate principally to the raiſing of taxes, and the elections of Members to ſerve in Parlia-

Parliament.—With regard to taxes, it is the ancient indiſputable privilege and right of the Houſe of Commons, that all grants of ſubſidies, or parliamentary aids, do begin in their Houſe, and are firſt beſtowed by them; although their grants are not effectual to all intents and purpoſes, until they have the aſſent of the other two branches of the legiſlature.

The method of making laws is much the ſame in both Houſes. In each Houſe the act of the majority binds the whole; and this majority is declared by votes, openly and publicly given; not as at Venice, and many other ſenatorial aſſemblies, privately or by ballot. This latter method may be ſerviceable to prevent intrigues and unconſtitutional combinations; but it is impoſſible to be practiſed with us, at leaſt in the Houſe of Commons, where every member's conduct is ſubject to the future cenſure of his conſtituents, and therefore ſhould be openly ſubmitted to their inſpection.

The Commons may be properly ſtiled the Grand Inqueſt of Great-Britain, empowered to enquire into all national grievances, in order to ſee them redreſſed: And though they have

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not the power of examining the meaneſt ſubject upon oath, yet they can ſearch into the conduct of the higheſt Peer in the realm, and in the name of the people, impeach the favourite or Miniſter of the King: They can call the Judges to an account for the mal-adminiſtration of their office, and bring all thoſe to juſtice who make an ill uſe of their power. Thus the Commons are the Grand Jury of the nation. But as it would be improper that thoſe who are impeached in ſo high a Court ſhould be tried by a lower, which might be intimidated and overawed by the power of the Commons, therefore to preſerve the dignity of the Peers and the ſecurity of the ſubject, thoſe whom they impeach are tried by the Lords, whoſe ſuperior dignity ſets them above all influence, and who have neither the ſame intereſts nor the ſame paſſions.

The Peers are created by the Crown; but their honours are hereditary, and cannot be taken from them, any more than their lives and eſtates, unleſs forfeited by the commiſſion of high treaſon; and they can be tried only by the whole Houſe of Peers, being ſubject to no other

other juriſdiction. "The great," ſays Monteſquieu, "are always obnoxious to popular envy; and were they to be judged by the people, they might be in danger from their judges, and would moreover be deprived of the privilege which the meaneſt ſubject is poſſeſſed of in a free ſtate, of being tried by their Peers. The Nobility for this reaſon ought not to be cited before the ordinary courts of judicature, but before that part of the legiſlature which is compoſed of their own body."

The Houſe of Peers is the laſt reſort in all civil cauſes, unleſs where the privileges of the Commons are affected; and they can try any Commoner on an impeachment of the Commons; but no ſuit or proſecution can be begun againſt a Commoner in the Houſe of Lords, though they may be poſſeſſed of a cauſe, and determine it finally in caſe of appeal.

Any bill for the making a new, or altering an old law, may be brought in, firſt into the Houſe of Peers, except a money bill; but no bill relating to the revenues or public taxes can be brought into the Houſe of Peers firſt, or altered when it comes from the Commons, though it may be totally rejected by the Lords.

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The Peers form the ſecond order in the State, and are placed in the middle of the balance to prevent the regal ſcale from preponderating to deſpotiſm or tyranny, or the democratical to anarchy and its conſequences. They are conſidered as mediators between the other two Eſtates, in the eye of our Conſtitution; and whilſt they maintain this character, they will be able to diſcharge this duty; but they would ceaſe to be ſo, were they ever to become the tools of faction, or the vaſſals of a Miniſter.

The right of creating Peers is veſted in the Crown, in order to reward eminent talents and diſtinguiſhed public ſervices; and to diſſipate, in the Houſe of Peers, any combination deſtructive to the harmony of the three Eſtates, or to the rights of either *. Although the

* Soon after the acceſſion of King George the Firſt, an attempt was made by the Miniſtry, who were at variance with the Prince of Wales, to wreſt from the Crown this prerogative. They brought a bill into Parliament to limit the Peerage; and ſo pleaſing was this meaſure to the Houſe of Lords in general, as tending to increaſe their power in the Legiſlature, that thoſe who in other queſtions oppoſed Miniſters, joined earneſtly in this; and the bill paſſed the Houſe of Lords

Crown has the ſole right of creating Peers, yet the independency of the Peerage on the Crown is ſecured by this circumſtance, that their rights and privileges cannot be taken from them at the will of the Crown. Could the Crown unmake as well as make Peers, it would be abſurd to talk of three Eſtates, ſince there would be virtually and in effect but two; therefore the Conſtitution hath provided againſt it.

The Peers of the realm can (the Commons cannot) aſſemble in their collective body; the Peers therefore ſit in Parliament in their collective, the Commons in their repreſentative body.

The Peers have an inherent, the Commons a delegated right.

The Peers ſit in Parliament for the ſupport of their own intereſts, as well as thoſe of the

Lords with a high hand. When it came to the Houſe of Commons, it met with a very different reception. So ſenſible were the Commons of the true motives of the Lords, that they rejected the bill by an immenſe majority.—Had this bill paſſed into a law, it would have deſtroyed that balance of the three branches of the Legiſlature, ſo eſſential to the Conſtitution, and ſo neceſſary to ſupport it.

Crown

Crown and of the people; and are accountable for their conduct, as all other men are, to God, to their own conſciences, and to their country. But the Commons are reſponſible not only to theſe, but to their conſtituents, before whom they muſt annually appear, according to the fundamental principles of the Conſtitution, to have a cenſure or approbation paſſed on their conduct, by the refuſal or grant of new powers to the particular Members. Thus the collective body of the people of Great-Britain delegate, but do not give up their truſt, or alienate their right and their power; and cannot be undone by having beggary or ſlavery brought upon them, unleſs they be exceſſively and univerſally corrupt.

The following obſervations upon the judiciary power, the liberty of the preſs, the controul of the executive and legiſlative authorities, and the advantages of the unity of the executive and the diviſion of the legiſlative powers, are chiefly taken from the productions of ſome of the beſt writers on the Engliſh Conſtitution; and as they explain the principles of

our Government, I have taken the liberty to lay them before the reader.

Though the judicial authority and the liberty of the preſs make no part of the conſtitutional powers which balance each other in our Government, yet they eſſentially intereſt the ſecurity of individuals, and, in the iſſue, the Conſtitution itſelf. I ſhall briefly conſider them as connected with the Conſtitution,

When a nation entruſts the power of the State to a certain number of perſons, or to one, it is with a view to two points,—the one, to repel more effectually foreign attacks—the other, to maintain domeſtic tranquillity. To accompliſh the former point, each individual ſurrenders a ſhare of his property, and ſometimes, to a certain degree, even of his liberty; to maintain the latter point, every individual muſt, excluſive of new renunciations of his natural liberty, moreover ſurrender (which is a matter of far more dangerous conſequence) a part of his perſonal ſecurity.

The ſafety therefore of the individual, and that of the nation itſelf, requires the utmoſt

precau-

precautions in the eſtabliſhment of that neceſſary but formidable prerogative, that of diſpenſing puniſhments. "There is no liberty," ſays Monteſquieu, "if the power of judging be not ſeparated from the legiſlative and executive powers. Were it joined with the legiſlative power, the life and liberty of the ſubject would be expoſed to arbitrary controul; for the Judge would be then the legiſlator: Were it joined to the executive power, the Judge might behave with all the violence of an oppreſſor." The judicial power therefore, in our State, is veſted in a ſubordinate and dependent body; dependent not in its particular acts, with regard to which it ought to be a ſanctuary, but in its rules and in its forms, which the legiſlative authority preſcribes *.

The Trial by Jury, that palladium of Engliſh liberty, was intended as a ſtrong barrier, always lodged in the hands of the people, to ſecure them againſt all tyranny, ſlavery, and oppreſſion. As the people cannot be bound by any law, without the conſent of their Repre-

* See De Lolme on the Engliſh Conſtitution.

ſentatives

ſentatives firſt had in Parliament; ſo neither can any Engliſhman ſuffer in his perſon or eſtate, for the breach of any law, or real or pretended crime, without the conſent of the people firſt had by a jury of his Peers or equals. By means of which, the judicial authority is not only placed out of the hands of thoſe who are veſted with the executive and legiſlative powers, but it is even out of the hands of the Judge himſelf. Conſequently the life and property of the ſubject are ſecured againſt all arbitrary attempts of officers appointed to adminiſter the law.

The *Habeas Corpus* act, which is conſidered as a ſecond *Magna Charta*, has definitely ſuppreſſed all reſources of oppreſſion. Every ſubject, when impriſoned, has a right to bring a writ before a Judge in Weſtminſter-Hall, called his *Habeas Corpus*. If that Judge, after conſidering the cauſe of commitment, ſhall find that the offence is bailable, the party is immediately admitted to bail, till he be condemned or acquitted in a proper court of juſtice. But this act is always ſuſpended on a rumour of a plot againſt the Government. Monteſquieu

teſquieu makes the following judicious remark on this act:—"If," ſays he, "the Legiſlature leaves the executive power in poſſeſſion of a right to impriſon thoſe ſubjects who can give ſecurity for their good behaviour, there is an end of liberty; unleſs they are taken up, in order to anſwer without delay to a capital crime: In this caſe, they are really free, being ſubject only to the power of the law. But ſhould the Legiſlature think itſelf in danger by ſome ſecret conſpiracy againſt the State, or by a correſpondence with a foreign enemy, it might authoriſe the executive power, for a ſhort and limited time, to impriſon ſuſpected perſons, who in that caſe would loſe their liberty only for a while, to preſerve it for ever."

The liberty of the preſs, that cenſorial power of openly canvaſſing and arraigning the conduct of thoſe who are inveſted with any branch of public authority, has been, in our Conſtitution, allotted to the people themſelves. Every ſubject in Britain has not only a right to preſent petitions to the King or Parliament, but he has a right alſo to lay his complaints and obſervations before the public. "A formidable

midable right this," ſays De Lolme, " to thoſe who rule mankind; and which, continually diſpelling the cloud of majeſty by which they are ſurrounded, brings them to a level with the reſt of the people, and ſtrikes at the very being of their authority."

By means of the preſs, the ſeveral meaſures adopted by Government; the different cauſes of any importance, whether civil or criminal, that occur in the courts of juſtice; the votes or reſolutions of Parliaments; and the moſt intereſting ſpeeches in both Houſes, are communicated to the public. By a circulation of a multiplicity of public papers, which are purchaſed with avidity by every man down to the cobler, and peruſed with eagerneſs, every individual not only becomes acquainted with the ſtate of the nation, but in ſome degree a politician.

It is this public notoriety of all things that conſtitutes the ſupplemental power or check, which is ſo uſeful to remedy the unavoidable inſufficiency of the laws, and keep within their reſpective bounds all thoſe perſons who enjoy any

any ſhare of public authority. "And whoever," ſays De Lolme, "conſiders what it is that conſtitutes the moving principles of what we call great affairs, and the invincible ſenſibility of man to the opinion of his fellow-creatures, will not heſitate to affirm, that, if it were poſſible for the liberty of the preſs to exiſt in a deſpotic Government, this liberty would alone form a counterpoiſe to the power of the Prince."

Of the controul of the executive and legiſlative authorities; and the advantages of the unity of the executive, and the diviſion of the legiſlative powers.

Notwithſtanding the executive authority is formidable, yet the Repreſentatives of the people have the power to controul it. It is from their liberality alone that the King can obtain ſubſidies.

Though he has the prerogative of declaring war, yet without his Parliament it is impoſſible for him to carry it on. He is the head of the Church; but he can neither alter the eſtabliſhed religion, nor call individuals to an account

for their religious opinions: He cannot even profeſs the religion which the Legiſlature has particularly forbidden; and the Prince who ſhall profeſs it, is declared incapable of inheriting the Crown of theſe kingdoms.

The King is the firſt magiſtrate; but he can make no change in the maxims and forms conſecrated by law and cuſtom; and though he is charged with the execution of the laws, they muſt direct his conduct, and bind him equally with his ſubjects.

The King has the privilege of coining money; but he cannot alter the ſtandard. He has the power of pardoning offenders; but he cannot exempt them from making compenſation to the parties injured. And ſhould theſe laws which limit the King's authority prove inſufficient, the Conſtitution has ſupplied the Commons with a means of immediate oppoſition to the miſconduct of Government, by giving them a right to impeach the Miniſters.

In fine, the executive power is formidable; but then it is for ever the ſame. Its reſources are vaſt; but their nature is at length known. It has been made the indiviſible and inalienable

attribute

attribute of one perſon alone; but then all other perſons become really intereſted to reſtrain it within its proper bounds.

"Though it is," ſays De Lolme, "without doubt abſolutely neceſſary for ſecuring the Conſtitution of a State, to reſtrain the executive power, yet it is ſtill more neceſſary to reſtrain the legiſlative. But here we muſt obſerve a difference between the legiſlative and executive powers. The latter may be confined, and even is the more eaſily ſo, when undivided; the legiſlative, on the contrary, in order to its being reſtrained, ſhould abſolutely be divided: For whatever laws it may make to reſtrain itſelf, they never can be, relatively to it, any thing more than ſimple reſolutions; as thoſe bars which it might erect to ſtop its own motions, muſt then be within it, and reſt upon it, they can be no bars. In a word, the ſame kind of impoſſibility is found to fix the legiſlative power, when it is one, which Archimedes objected againſt his moving the earth. And ſuch a diviſion of the Legiſlature not only renders it to be reſtrained, ſince each of thoſe parts into which it is divided can then ſerve as

a bar to the motions of the others; but it even makes it be actually reſtrained. If it has been divided into only two parts, it is probable, that they will not in all caſes unite, either for doing or undoing; if it has been divided into three parts, the chance that no changes will be, is thereby greatly increaſed."

If the legiſlative and executive powers differ ſo greatly with regard to the neceſſity of their being divided, they differ no leſs with regard to the other conſequences ariſing from ſuch diviſion. The diviſion of the executive power neceſſarily introduces actual oppoſitions, even violent ones, between the parts into which it has been divided; and that part which in the iſſue ſucceeds ſo far as to abſorb and unite in itſelf all the others, immediately ſets itſelf above the laws.

But thoſe oppoſitions which take place, and which the public good requires ſhould take place, between the different parts of the Legiſlature, never are any thing more than appoſitions between contrary opinions and intentions; all is tranſacted in the regions of the underſtanding; and the only contention that

ariſes is wholly carried on with thoſe inoffenſive weapons, *ayes* and *noes*.

In a word, the reſult of a diviſion of the executive power, is either a more or leſs ſpeedy eſtabliſhment of the ſtrongeſt, or a continual ſtate of war *; that of a diviſion of the legiſlative power is either truth, or general tranquility.—The following maxim will therefore be admitted, " That the laws of a State may be " permanent, it is requiſite that the legiſlative " power ſhould be divided;—that they may " have weight, and continue in force, it is " neceſſary that the executive power ſhould " be one †."

Here

* The intelligent reader muſt be acquainted with the frequent hoſtilities that took place between the Roman Senate and the Tribunes. In Sweden there have been continual contentions between the King and the Senate, in which they have overpowered each other by turns. And in this kindom, when the executive power became double, by King Charles the Firſt, allowing the Parliament to have a perpetual and independent exiſtence, a civil war almoſt immediately followed—the Houſe of Peers was annihilated, the monarchy overthrown, and the liberties of the people ſubdued.

† The convention of the States, at the Revolution, were ſo ſenſible of the ſtability accruing to the empire, from the unity of the executive power, that they preſerved it undivided, though they had it in their power to divide and diſtribute

Here then is the fundamental Conſtitution of our Government. The ſupreme executive power is lodged in the hands of the Sovereign, as a ſacred *depoſitum* for the benefit of the people; and the Crown is, under certain conditions, rendered hereditary in the illuſtrious houſe of Brunſwick Lunenburgh. The executive authority is not perſonal as to the King, but attached to the Crown, inalienable and indiviſible from it; and its indiviſibility forms the ſtrength and ſtability of the empire. The royal prerogative is formidable, but it is indiſpenſibly neceſſary, and exactly limited and aſcertained. In order to maintain this prerogative, and the rights of the people, which are inſeparably connected with thoſe of the Crown, the Sovereign is inveſted with the excluſive

tribute the prerogatives of the Crown as they might have thought proper. Thoſe prerogatives (except that of convoking Parliaments at the pleaſure of the Sovereigns), deſtructive of public liberty, which King James had aſſumed, were retrenched from the Crown; but as to proceeding to transfer to other hands any part of its authority, no propoſal was ever made about it. Thoſe prerogatives which were taken from the Crown were annihilated; and all the executive power that was thought neceſſary to be continued in the Government, was, as before, left undivided in the Crown.

privilege

privilege of diſſolving Parliaments, and of putting a negative on their reſolutions.

As the unity of the executive power is indiſpenſibly requiſite to give ſolidity to the State, ſo is a diviſion of the legiſlative authority. The legiſlative power is therefore veſted in two aſſemblies, the Houſe of Peers, and the Houſe of Commons.

The Peers, who form the ſecond order of the State, ſit in Parliament by virtue of a right inherent in their perſons; and, by means of their conſtitutional power, their rank and dignity, are enabled to preſerve an equilibrium between the other two branches of the Legiſlature.

The Commons, who form the third Eſtate, being annually elected by, and out of the body of the people, ſit in Parliament by virtue of a delegated power; and are only veſted with a truſt by the people, to the end they may protect and defend them in their rights and privileges; and are, conſtitutionally, a body of men merely paſſive, with regard to their creation, duration, and diſſolution; and therefore have, by no means, any conſent to give to their own duration, even for an hour.

Thus

Thus the legiſlative body being compoſed of two parts, one checks the other, by the mutual privilege of rejecting. They are both checked by the executive power, as the executive is by the legiſlative: And the annual exerciſe of the people's elective power, is their conſtitutional check againſt the treachery of their own members.

Thus the plan of our Government intended to fix and preſerve ſo juſt a proportion of the Monarchic, Ariſtocratic, and Democratic powers, by their repreſentatives, King, Lords, and Commons; that any two of thoſe powers might be able jointly to give a check to the other, but not to deſtroy it, a meaſure which muſt neceſſarily induce a different form of Government.

Notwithſtanding this is the baſis of the Britiſh Conſtitution, the duration of which muſt abſolutely depend upon the juſt equilibrium preſerved between the three branches of the Legiſlature; yet, ſoon after the Revolution, we began to recede from the original principles of our Government; the Houſe of Commons began to uſurp a power of reſtraining the annual exerciſe of the elective power of the people; and

and hath, by paſſing the Triennial and Septennial Acts, not only ſwelled beyond its conſtitutional bounds, but infringed the rights of the people of Great-Britain.

But, in order fully to underſtand the cauſes which combined to bring about the Triennial Bill, it will be neceſſary to lay before the reader the ſtate of the nation, as well as the ſtate of parties, at the Revolution, and during the reign of King William.

At that memorable æra, the kingdom was divided into two great parties, Whig and Tory. Both theſe parties had ſacrificed their country to their party: Both ſacrificed, on this occaſion, their party to their country. United by a common ſenſe of danger, they concurred in their applications to the Prince of Orange, to aſſiſt them, by his arms, in the recovery of their laws and liberty. But immediately after his arrival, the Tories perceiving that, contrary to his declaration*, he aſpired to the Crown, they em-

 ployed

* In order to redreſs all the grievances which the nation complained of, the Prince of Orange ſaid, "That he intended to come over to England with an armed force, which might protect him from the King's evil counſellors; and that his ſole aim was to have a legal and free Parliament ſummoned, who

ployed all their influence, firſt in oppoſing his elevation to the Throne, and afterwards in thwarting his meaſures. The friends of the Church, thoſe of the lineal ſucceſſion, the Roman Catholics, and all ſuch as were diſguſted with William's conduct and deportment, compoſed this party. On the other hand, as he had been bred a Calviniſt, and always expreſſed an abhorrence of ſpiritual perſecution, the Preſbyterians, and other Proteſtant Diſſenters, who conſtituted the Whig faction, conſidered him as their peculiar protector, and warmly eſpouſed his intereſts. The Whigs were poſſeſſed of the greater part of the monied intereſt, and the Tories of the landed property, in the kingdom. The Whig intereſt of courſe generally prevailed in the elections—money will always prevail

who might provide for the ſafety and liberty of the nation, as well as examine the proofs of the Prince of Wales's legitimacy. No one," he added, "could entertain ſuch hard thoughts of him as to imagine, that he had formed other deſigns than to procure the full and laſting ſettlement of religion, liberty, and property. The force which he meant to bring with him, was totally diſproportioned to any views of conqueſt; and it was abſurd to ſuſpect, that ſo many perſons of high rank, both in Church and State, would have given him ſo many ſolemn invitations for ſuch a pernicious purpoſe."—*See the Prince of Orange's Declaration.*

among

among venal borough electors. The Tories, jealous of the power and Republican principles of the Whigs, and averſe to William's ſchemes of foreign politics, often thwarted his meaſures. The Whigs, partly from the terrors of invaſion and popery, partly from the ambition of being courted by the Crown, and partly from the proſpect of advantage, in advancing money to the Government on the funds eſtabliſhed by Parliament, gratified his ambition in carrying on the war. William, perplexed and diſtracted between two implacable factions, whom he equally feared, and whom he regarded no longer than they were ſubſervient to his ambition, endeavoured, during the whole of his reign, to trim the balance between them, by mingling them together in his Miniſtry.

Such was the ſtate of parties at the acceſſion, and during the reign of this Prince, who, it is well known, was placed on the Throne of Great-Britain in conſequence of an expreſs capitulation with the people.

But notwithſtanding the prerogatives of the Crown were more narrowly circumſcribed, and more exactly defined, than in any former pe-

riod of the Engliſh Government, yet the Convention Parliament left their new Monarch the old regal uſurped power over Parliaments, in its full extent. They left him at liberty to convoke, ~~adjourn,~~ prorogue, and diſſolve them at his pleaſure; a prerogative to which they imputed many of the late and former calamities of the kingdom. With regard to Parliaments, "the claim of right only declares, that elections ought to be free; that freedom of ſpeech and debates ought not to be queſtioned out of Parliament; and that Parliaments ought to be held frequently." Thus the Convention of the States left King William at liberty to aſſemble Parliaments at his pleaſure; and to govern by one and the ſame Parliament as long as he found it ſubſervient to his intereſt. Had they declared, that Parliaments ſhould be held annually, and a new Houſe of Commons elected every year, they would have then plainly declared for the Conſtitution, and the elective power of the people.

The continental war, which King William, immediately upon his acceſſion, dragged this nation

nation into, made annual ſupplies, and conſequently annual Seſſions of Parliament, neceſſary. But William ſoon diſſolved that Parliament which placed him on the Throne. He was diſguſted at the Commons for ſettling his revenue only from year to year, and thereby keeping him in a ſtate of dependence upon them; and for not granting ſufficient ſupplies for carrying on the war. At the ſame time, being promiſed large ſupplies of money from the Tories, provided that the Convention Parliament ſhould be diſſolved, he thought proper to diſſolve it in the beginning of the year 1690, and immediately convoked another, in which the Tory intereſt prevailed.

The Marquis of Carmarthen; the Earls of Nottingham, Rocheſter, Ranelaugh, and Portland; the Lords Godolphin and Sydney; Sir Edward Seymour, and Sir John Trevor, were the principal perſons that compoſed the Adminiſtration, in which the Tory intereſt predominated. Sir John Trevor, who had been created Maſter of the Rolls by King James, was choſen Speaker of the Houſe of Commons. He was a violent Tory, a bold artful man, and under-

undertook to procure a majority to be at the devotion of the Court, provided he ſhould be ſupplied with the neceſſary ſums for the purpoſes of corruption. William, finding that there was no other way of maintaining his Adminiſtration in peace, thought proper to countenance the practice of purchaſing votes; and appointed Trevor firſt Commiſſioner of the Great Seal.

Notwithſtanding this ſeemingly judicious arrangement of the Miniſtry and the Commons, which promiſed harmony at home and ſucceſs abroad, a ſpirit of diſcontent ſoon inſinuated itſelf into both Houſes of Parliament, and infected great part of the nation. The mal-contents of both parties affirmed, "That the intereſt of the nation was ſacrificed to foreign connections, and that the King's favour was chiefly beſtowed upon Dutchmen, in prejudice to his Engliſh ſubjects. They obſerved, that the number of forces he demanded was conſiderably greater than that of any army which had ever been paid by the public, even when the nation was in the moſt imminent danger: That, inſtead

inſtead of contributing as allies to the maintenance of the war upon the Continent, they had embarked as principals, and bore the greater part of the burthen, though they had the leaſt ſhare of the profit. They expatiated upon the loſs of ſhips, which had lately fallen a prey to the enemy; the conſumption of ſeamen; the neglect of the fiſheries; the interruption of commerce, in which the nation was ſupplanted by her allies, as well as invaded by her enemies; the low ebb of the kingdom's treaſure, exhauſted in hiring foreign bottoms, and paying for foreign troops, to fight foreign quarrels; the ſlaughter of the beſt and braveſt of their countrymen, whoſe blood had been laviſhly ſpent in ſupport of connections with which they ought to have had no concern. They complained that they were plundered and abuſed; that immenſe ſums were extorted from them by the moſt grievous impoſitions; that by the infamous expedient of borrowing upon eſtabliſhed funds, their taxes were perpetuated; and their burdens would daily increaſe. They enumerated among their grievances the violation

tion of property, by preſſing tranſport ſhips into the ſervice, without ſettling any fund of payment for the owners; the flagrant partiality in favour of the allies, who carried on an open commerce with France, and ſupplied the enemy with neceſſaries, while the Engliſh laboured under the ſevereſt prohibitions, and were, in effect, the dupes of thoſe very powers whom they protected. They demonſtrated the miſchiefs that neceſſarily aroſe from the unſettled ſtate of the nation. They obſerved, that Government could not be duly eſtabliſhed, until a ſolemn declaration ſhould confirm the legality of that tenure by which their Majeſties poſſeſſed the Throne; that the ſtructure of Parliaments was deficient in point of ſolidity, as they exiſted entirely at the pleaſure of the Crown, which would uſe them no longer than they ſhould be found neceſſary in raiſing ſupplies for the uſe of the Government. They inſiſted that there could be no real ſettlement, till the manner and time of calling Parliaments, and their ſitting, when called, were fully determined; and this, in order to prevent the practice of keeping

keeping one and the ſame Parliament ſo long on foot, till the majority was corrupted by offices, gifts, and penſions. They ſaid that the aſſurances given at the Revolution had led them to think that the ancient legal courſe of annually choſen Parliaments would have been immediately reſtored; and the particular circumſtances of King William, who had received the Crown by gift of the people, and who had renewed the original contract with the people, were urged as particular reaſons for the nation to expect his compliance."

In order to remedy theſe evils, and put an end to a Parliament which had ſat three Seſſions, and began to be formidable to the people, from its conceſſions to the Miniſtry, the Earl of Shrewſbury, who had reſigned his office of Secretary of State, and become a mal-content, brought a bill into the Houſe of Lords for Triennial Parliaments, providing that there ſhould be an annual Seſſion; that if, at the expiration of the three years, the Crown ſhould not order the writs to be iſſued, the Lord Chancellor, or Keeper, or Commiſſioner of the Great Seal, ſhould iſſue them *ex officio*, and by autho-

rity of the act, under ſevere penalties. The bill was ſupported by the Earl of Marlborough *, who, having been diſmiſſed from all his employments, committed to the Tower, but admitted to bail, had declared open war againſt the Miniſtry. The Marquis of Hallifax likewiſe ſupported it, from oppoſition to the Miniſtry; the Earl of Mulgrave, for an opportunity to diſplay his talents, and acquire that conſideration which he thought due to his merit. The Earls of Devonſhire, Montague, and

* This nobleman was a Tory from principle, and his ruling paſſions ſeem to have been avarice and ambition. He was perhaps the greateſt General, and, at the ſame time, the greateſt Stateſman of the age in which he lived. He had deſerted the unfortunate King James, to whom he owed his whole fortune, and joined the Prince of Orange immediately after his arrival in England, as he foreſaw that that Prince would ſoon be raiſed to the Throne. But at this period, the Duke of Berwick ſays, "Marlborough, being diſſatisfied with King William, and perhaps calling to mind the great obligations he had to James, wrote the latter, expreſſing his repentance in the ſtrongeſt terms: He aſked pardon of the King and Queen, which was granted him: He took upon him the buſineſs of Agent, or Charge d'Affaires, for King James: He gained over the Earl of Shrewſbury; intrigued with Caermarthen (Danby); promiſed to bring back the Princeſs of Denmark to her duty; in ſome meaſure engaged to alienate the affection of the army; and preſſed King James to make a deſcent in England with twenty

A. D. 1692.

and Bradford, joined in the ſame cauſe, from principle; and the ſame pretence was uſed by the Earls of Stamford, Monmouth, Warrington, and many other Whigs and Tories. The courtiers, who oppoſed the bill, ſaid, that frequent elections would render the freeholders proud and inſolent, encourage faction among the electors, and entail a continual expence upon the Member, as he would find himſelf obliged, during the whole time of his ſitting, to behave like a candidate, conſcious how ſoon the time of election would revolve. In ſpite of the miniſterial influence in the Upper Houſe, the

twenty thouſand men. The King never placed an entire confidence in him, yet he might be ſincere, at leaſt he performed part of what he promiſed. The Princeſs of Denmark, encouraged by his perſuaſion, and feeling a return of affection for her father, perhaps too urged by reſentment againſt the Prince and Princeſs of Orange, who treated her ill, made her peace with the King, humbly aſking pardon of her faults, and promiſing to join him as ſoon as he ſhould make his appearance in England. Admiral Ruſſel entered into the ſame cabals, and Marlborough preſſed the King to accept his offers of ſervice. Godolphin likewiſe took a part in them, and offered to reſign his poſt of Treaſurer, but continued in it by the expreſs order of King James. The Marquis of Caermarthen, notwithſtanding the attachment he publicly profeſſed to the Revolution, lent an ear in private to the propoſals of the Jacobites," &c.—*See King James's and the Duke of Berwick's Memoirs.*

bill paſſed, and contained a proviſo, that the preſent Parliament ſhould not continue any longer than the month of January enſuing.

The Court renewed its efforts againſt it in the Houſe of Commons, where, nevertheleſs, it was carried; but all theſe endeavours were fruſtrated by the prerogative of the King, who, by refuſing his aſſent, prevented its being enacted into a law.

In the courſe of the year 1693, the King, in order to gratify the Whigs, and trim the balance between the two parties in his Miniſtry, gave the Great Seal to Sir John Somers, and appointed Sir John Trenchard Secretary of State. Somers was well ſkilled in the law, as well as in many other branches of polite and uſeful literature. He was gentle, candid, and equitable; a Whig in principles, yet moderate, pacific, and conciliating. Trenchard was calm, ſedate, well acquainted with foreign affairs, and conſidered as a leading man in the Whig party. Marlborough had been reſtored to his rank in the army, and the chiefs of his party, gratified with places and penſions, were become proſelytes. The leaders of the oppoſition were Sir Edward

Edward Seymour, and Sir Chriſtopher Muſgrave. The firſt was the proudeſt Commoner in England, and the boldeſt orator that ever filled the Speaker's Chair; he had reſigned his place at the Treaſury Board, and become a mal-content. Sir Chriſtopher Muſgrave was a gentleman of a grave and regular deportment, who had rejected many offers of the Miniſtry, which he oppoſed with great violence; and though an extravagant Tory from principle, had refuſed to concur with all the deſigns of the late King. Others declared war againſt the Adminiſtration, becauſe their own talents were not ſufficiently conſidered. Of theſe, the chiefs were Paul Foley and Robert Harley. Foley was a lawyer of good capacity, extenſive learning, and virtuous principles; but peeviſh, obſtinate, and moroſe. Harley poſſeſſed a good fund of learning; was capable of uncommon application, particularly turned to politics; and cheriſhed the moſt aſpiring ambition.

Harley and Foley having been appointed Commiſſioners for inſpecting the public accounts, delivered a report which contained a charge of peculation againſt Lord Falkland,

who

who preſided at the Board of Admiralty; upon which he was committed to the Tower. They likewiſe preſented to the Houſe two reports concerning ſums iſſued for ſecret ſervices, and to Members of Parliament. This was a diſcovery of the moſt ſcandalous practices in the myſtery of corruption, equally exerciſed on the individuals of both parties, in occaſional bounties, grants, places, penſions, equivalents, and additional ſervices. The Oppoſitioniſts therefore juſtly obſerved, the Houſe of Commons was ſo managed, that the King could baffle any bill, quaſh all grievances, and ſtifle all accounts, &c. In order, therefore, to put an end to a corrupt Houſe of Commons, they made a ſecond effort to obtain an act for Triennial Parliaments; but the bill was rejected by the invincible power of a majority entirely devoted to the Crown.

In the courſe of the next year, the King, ſtill finding the people clamorous and diſcontented, the trade of the nation decayed, the affairs of State miſmanaged, and the Miniſters recriminating upon one another, perceived the neceſſity of removing from his Council thoſe who were the moſt diſagreeable to the people.

The

The Earl of Sunderland*, who had betrayed his late maſter, was become chief Counſellor to King William; to whom he repreſented, that the Tories were averſe to the continuance of a war, which had been productive of nothing but damage and diſgrace; whereas the Whigs were much more tractable, and would bleed freely, partly from the terrors of invaſion and popery, partly from the ambition of being courted by the Crown, and partly from the proſpect of advantage, in advancing money to the Government on the funds eſtabliſhed by Parliament. In compliance with Sunderland's advice, and in hopes of ſettling an Adminiſtration poſſeſſed of abilities and popularity, and diſpoſed to enter into his meaſures, the King diſmiſſed from his Council the Earl of Nottingham, who, of all his Miniſters, was the moſt odious to the people; and his place of Secretary of State was beſtowed upon the Earl of Shrewſbury. The Lieutenancy of the Tower,

* While Sunderland was chief and favourite Miniſter to King James, he entered into a correſpondence with the Prince of Orange; and, at the expence of his own honour and his maſter's intereſt, ſecretly embraced a cauſe, which, he foreſaw, was likely ſoon to predominate.—*See the Duke of Berwick's Memoirs, and Smollet and M'Pherſon's Hiſtories.*

and

and all other of a ſimilar nature, were given to the Whigs; but the Tories were too powerful in the Houſe of Commons to be exaſperated, and therefore a good number of them were retained in office.

A. D. 1694. At this time, the King of France began to be tired of a war, which, notwithſtanding his victories, had impoveriſhed his ſubjects, and reduced his kingdom to poverty and diſtreſs. He tampered with the allies apart, in hope of dividing and detaching them from the Grand Confederacy: He ſolicited the Northern Crowns to engage as mediators for a general peace. A memorial was preſented by the Daniſh Miniſter to King William; by which it appears, that the French King would have been contented to purchaſe a peace with ſome conſiderable conceſſions. But the terms were rejected by the King of England, whoſe ambition and revenge were not yet gratified; and whoſe ſubjects, though heavy laden, could ſtill bear additional burdens.

Having ~~appointed~~ an Adminiſtration entirely devoted to his meaſures, and being determined to proſecute the war with vigour, William

liam thought proper to ſecure a majority in both Houſes, in order to obtain the neceſſary ſupplies, by agreeing to the bill for Triennial Parliaments. This Mr Harley brought in, by order of the Lower Houſe; and it kept pace with the conſideration of the ſupplies. The Triennial Bill enacted, that a Parliament ſhould be held once in three years at leaſt; that within three years at fartheſt after the diſſolution of the Parliament then ſubſiſting, and ſo from time to time for ever after, legal writs under the Great Seal ſhould be iſſued by the direction of the Crown, for calling, aſſembling, and holding another new Parliament; that no Parliament ſhould continue longer than three years at fartheſt, to be accounted from the firſt day of the firſt ſeſſion; and, that the Parliament then ſubſiſting ſhould ceaſe and determine on the firſt day of the next following November, unleſs their Majeſties ſhould think fit to diſſolve it ſooner. The Duke of Devonſhire, the Marquis of Halifax, the Earls of Weymouth and Ayleſbury, proteſted againſt this bill, becauſe it tended to the continuance of the preſent Parliament longer than was agreeable to the Conſtitution of England.

From this faithful but unadorned narration of facts, it appears, that a great number of Whigs, as well as Tories, partly from principle, partly from diſaffection, partly from reſentment, and partly from diſcontent, at ſeeing the intereſt of their country ſacrificed to foreign connections, brought forward, and carried the Triennial Bill through both Houſes of Parliament; and, that the King, after having at different times prevented its being enacted into a law, by the power of his prerogative and the influence of the Crown, at length gave his aſſent to it, entirely to gratify his ambition in carrying on the war, in order to humble the pride of the haughty Lewis, and to aggrandize that country to which he owed his birth, at the expence of this nation which raiſed him to the Throne.

The Triennial Act, without doubt, was an encroachment upon the rights of the people, and an infringement of the Conſtitution; but as King William retained the power of convoking, as well as diſſolving, Parliaments at his pleaſure, and as the object of the bill was the diſſolution of a Houſe of Commons under the

the undue influence of the Crown, and an effectual bar againſt long, and conſequently corrupt, Parliaments, the conduct of the Oppoſitioniſts is highly meritorious for procuring this act---an act that ſtripped the Crown of an uſurped prerogative, which had been productive of the greateſt evils to the nation.

Had King William and his Miniſtry intended to have eſtabliſhed an independent Houſe of Commons, they would have reſtored the Conſtitution to its firſt principles, and eſtabliſhed annual Parliaments and a new Houſe of Commons every year. This would have been an infallible remedy againſt all corruption; becauſe no corruption can ſtick upon a body of men that is continually changing.

A political writer dates the decline of our Conſtitution from the Revolution; becauſe, he ſays, " the principles of the Rebel Parliament, of reſtraining the exerciſe of the elective power of the people by acts of Parliament, were adopted into the Conſtitution at that very critical period of our hiſtory. Hitherto it had only the prerogative of the Crown to ſtruggle with (ſaving the ſingle inſtance of the Rebel

Parliament above mentioned); but at the Revolution, which brought King William the Third to the Crown of England, he and this Parliament began the practice of reſtraining the elective power of the people by the legiſlative authority—-a power that might become ten thouſand times more dangerous to the elective rights of the people, than the Crown could ever poſſibly be."

Though this is undoubtedly conſtitutional doctrine, yet the Patriots at that period, owing to a Prince tenacious of his prerogative, and to a ſervile Miniſtry, had it not in their power to reſtore the Conſtitution to its firſt principles, by eſtabliſhing annual Parliaments and a new Houſe of Commons every year. They were ſenſible of the benefits that would accrue to the nation from annual Parliaments, and ſtruggled hard for them; and obtained with much difficulty, at the end of five or ſix years, a bill for Triennial Parliaments. But had it been foretold to thoſe worthies who obtained this bill, that a time would come when even the term of Triennial Parliaments would be deemed too

ſhort,

ſhort, and a Parliament, choſen for three years, would chuſe itſelf for four more, and entail Septennial Parliaments on the nation; that this would happen, and the fruits of their honeſt labours be loſt, in little more than twenty years; and that it would be brought about, whilſt our Government continued on the foundations they had then ſo newly laid: If all this had been foretold at the time I mention, it would have appeared improbable and monſtrous to the friends of the Revolution: Yet it hath happened; and, notwithſtanding the eloquence and abilities of many genuine friends to the Conſtitution and the liberties of the people have often been exerted, in order to procure a repeal of this unconſtitutional act, it ſtill continues, and is growing familiar to us.

But, in order to explain the cauſes which brought about, and the pernicious effects produced by, the Septennial Bill, it will be neceſſary to remind the reader of the ſtate of Parties, and the ſituation of the kingdom, during the reign of Queen Anne, and at the acceſſion of King George the Firſt.

During

During the reign of Queen Anne, the nation continued to be agitated by the Whig and Tory Parties; and each of theſe factions, in its turn, engroſſed the Adminiſtration and legiſlative power. This Princeſs aſcended the Throne in the 38th year of her age, to the great ſatisfaction of all Parties; even the Jacobites ſeemed pleaſed with her elevation, on the ſuppoſition, that, as in all probability ſhe would have no heirs of her own body, the dictates of natural affection would induce her to alter the ſucceſſion in favour of her brother. Anne was zealouſly devoted to the Church of England; and conſidered the Tories, who had always profeſſed an inviolable attachment to her perſon and intereſt, as the friends of Monarchy, and the true ſons of the Church: But, notwithſtanding her prepoſſeſſions in favour of the Tories, which plainly appeared in the choice of her firſt Miniſtry, her conduct, during the greater part of her reign, was wholly influenced by the Counteſs of Marlborough, a woman of an imperious temper and intriguing genius, who had been intimate with

A. D. 1701.

the

the Princeſs from her tender years, and gained a ſurprizing aſcendancy over her ſpirit.

The Queen, immediately after her acceſſion, formed her Miniſtry chiefly from the Tory party. The Earl of Rocheſter, her firſt couſin, was continued Lord Lieutenant of Ireland; the Privy Seal was intruſted to the Marquis of Normandy; the Earl of Nottingham, and Sir Charles Hedges, were appointed Secretaries of State; Godolphin was made Lord Treaſurer. Lord Somers, and ſome of his friends, were diſmiſſed from the Privy Council; and the Earl of Abingdon, Viſcount Weymouth, Lord Dartmouth, Sir Chriſtopher Muſgrave, Grenville, Howe, Gower, and Harcourt, were ſworn in their room. The Duke of Devonſhire was appointed Steward of the Houſehold; the Earl of Bedford, Treaſurer; the Earl of Jerſey, Chamberlain; and Sir Edward Seymour, Comptroller. The Prince of Denmark was inveſted with the title of Generaliſſimo of all the Queen's forces by ſea and land, and afterwards created Lord High Admiral; and the Earl of Marlborough was declared Captain General of all her land forces, both at home and abroad.

Marl-

Marlborough, by the influence of his wife with the Queen, and the weight of his friends in the Council, carried his point for a declaration of war againſt France, and for the Engliſh to act as principles on the Continent *. This Nobleman, who had frequently changed parties during the two preceding reigns, always ſteady to his principles of avarice and ambition, patroniſed, during this reign, both the Whig and Tory factions, as their intereſt happened to predominate in the Cabinet and in the Parliament. During almoſt the whole of this reign, he retained the command of the confederate army in the Netherlands, where, it muſt be acknowledged, he ſhined with diſtinguiſhed luſtre, both as a General and a Stateſman. He reduced a number of important fortreſſes, and obtained many ſignal victories over troops, not only formidable for their numbers and diſcipline, but for the abilities of their Commanders. But though Marlborough, by his victories and conqueſts,

* Rocheſter propoſed in Council, that the Engliſh ſhould avoid a declaration of war with France, and act as auxiliaries only. Finding himſelf outweighed by the intereſt of Marlborough and Godolphin, he ſoon reſigned his government of Ireland, which was conferred on the Duke of Ormond.

queſts, ſaved the Houſe of Auſtria from ruin, and enlarged the territories of the new Republic of Holland, they were obtained at a vaſt expence of blood and treaſure to the people of Old England; who have too long been the dupes of thoſe imperious, haughty, and ungrateful powers.

During the firſt four years of this reign, the Tories, both in Church and State, triumphed in the favour of their Sovereign. The rights of Parliament, the memory of the late King, and even the act limiting the ſucceſſion to the Houſe of Hanover, became the ſubjects of ridicule. The Queen was flattered as poſſeſſor of the Prerogatives of the ancient Monarchy; the hiſtory written by her grandfather the Earl of Clarendon was, for the firſt time, publiſhed, to inculcate principles of obedience, and inſpire the people with an abhorrence of oppoſition to an anointed Sovereign. The war was carried on with uncommon vigour and ſucceſs; the neceſſary ſupplies were chearfully raiſed; Marlborough was thanked by both Houſes of Parliament for his great and ſignal ſervices, created a Duke, and gratified with a penſion of 5000l. annually,

for his life. But this harmony between the Parliament and the Duke did not continue long. The Commons refuſing to ſettle the penſion upon his heirs male, he was diſguſted at the Tories, with whom he had been hitherto connected; and his Ducheſs having alienated the Queen's affections from that party, the Miniſtry was changed, and the Parliament diſſolved.

The Earl of Nottingham reſigned the Seals. The Earl of Jerſey and Sir Edward Seymour were diſmiſſed; the Great Seal was committed to Mr William Cowper, who was a ſtaunch Whig, with the title of Lord Keeper. He was a lawyer, of good extraction, ſuperior talents, engaging manners, and eminence in his profeſſion. The Earl of Kent was appointed Chamberlain, Harley Secretary of State, and Henry St John Secretary at War. The Duke of Buckinghamſhire was deprived of the Privy Seal, and that office conferred on the Duke of Newcaſlle, a nobleman of powerful influence with the Whig party. The Earl of Montague was created Duke of Montague; the Earl of Peterborough and Lord Cholmondley were choſen of the Privy Council; and the Lord Cutts was ſent to command

mand the troops in Ireland, under the Duke of Ormond.

The Miniſtry of Scotland were likewiſe changed; the Duke of Queenſberry reſumed the management of affairs in that Kingdom, under the title of Lord Privy Seal; and the office of Commiſſioner was conferred upon the young Duke of Argyle, who ſucceeded to his father's influence among the Preſbyterians.

Both parties had exerted themſelves with great induſtry in the election of members for the new Parliament, but a majority of the Whigs was returned; and the Lord Godolphin, who was thought all his life to have a predilection for King James, openly countenanced that faction. The majority of both Houſes of Parliament profeſſed the ſame principles, and ſtrenuouſly ſupported the Queen in all her deſigns.

The war was proſecuted with vigour and ſucceſs: the kingdom was bleſſed with plenty: the Queen was univerſally beloved: and the public credit flouriſhed both at home and abroad.

The French Monarch, having ſuſtained ſuch a number of defeats as had drained his kingdom of people, and exhauſted his treaſury, profeſſed

his readineſs to agree to almoſt any terms the Engliſh ſhould preſcribe. He offered to cede either Spain and the Weſt-Indies, or Milan, Naples, and Sicily, to King Charles, the Duke of Anjou's rival; to give up a barrier for the Dutch in the Netherlands; and to indemnify the Duke of Savoy for the ravages that had been committed in his dominions. But theſe conceſſions, which would have eſtabliſhed an equal balance between the Houſes of Auſtria and Bourbon, were rejected. The principal powers of the confederacy were fired with the ambition of making conqueſts; the Dutch in particular were intoxicated with ſucceſs, and their Penſionary Hienſius entirely influenced by the Duke of Marlborough, who found his account in the continuance of the war, which at once gratified his avarice and ambition.

Immediately after the conferences broke up, the Tories began to meditate ſchemes of oppoſition againſt the Duke, whoſe victories in the Netherlands*, where the allies had made their principal

* The confederates, during this war, paid no regard to a maxim of the old Duke of Schomberg, "That attacking France in the Netherlands was like taking a bull by the horns." The intereſt of King Charles was ſacrificed to ſatiate the avarice of Marlborough, and to aggrandize the Dutch.

cipal efforts, were brilliant, yet they were attended with enormous expences, ſeverely felt by the people, and counterbalanced by many loſſes and diſgraces both by ſea and land. The Engliſh were defeated in the plains of Almanza, chiefly through the cowardice of the Portugueſe. The war in Spain, where the confederates ſhould have acted with vigour, languiſhed, owing to the diſtractions in the Council of King Charles, and to the want of able Generals, troops, and treaſure. The operations in general at ſea were carried on to the detriment, if not to the diſgrace, of England. The expedition againſt Toulon, which had been planned at a vaſt expence, miſcarried, through the ſelfiſhneſs of the Court of Vienna, whoſe chief object of attention was their own war in Naples. The people of Great-Britain, who began to bear their burdens with impatience, ſuſtained almoſt the whole weight of the war; the Auſtrians, Germans, and Dutch, were always deficient in furniſhing their ſtipulated quotas, and truſted to the Engliſh Parliament for making them good. The coin of the nation began to decline; and the people, particularly the Tories, began to be ſick of the war and the

Whig

Whig Miniſtry, to whom they imputed the burdens under which they crouched.

At the ſame time, the perſonal intereſt of the Ducheſs of Marlborough with the Queen began to be ſhaken by her own inſolence. That lady was ſupplanted by Mrs Maſham, who ſucceeded to that aſcendancy over the ſpirit of her Sovereign which the Ducheſs had formerly poſſeſſed. This new Confidante acted as auxiliary to Mr Secretary Harley, who had inſinuated himſelf into the Queen's good graces; determined to unite the Tory intereſt under his own auſpices, and expel the Whigs from the advantages they poſſeſſed under the government. His chief coadjutor in this ſcheme was Henry St John, Secretary at War, afterwards Lord Bolingbroke, a man of warm imagination and elegant taſte; penetrating, eloquent, ambitious, and enterpriſing; whoſe talents were rather ſpecious than ſolid, and whoſe principles were looſe and fluctuating.

Theſe politicians, with the aſſiſtance of Sir Simon Harcourt, Attorney-General, a colleague of uncommon ability and credit, exerted their endeavours to rally and reconcile the diſunited Tories, whoſe party was greatly ſtrengthened by the unreaſonable

reaſonable haughtineſs of the Engliſh Plenipotentiaries at Gertruydenburgh.

The defeat at Oudenarde, the ſurrender of Liſle, the ſtrongeſt town in Flanders, and a ſevere winter, which compleated the miſeries of the French King's ſubjects, determined that Monarch to ſacrifice all the conſiderations of pride and ambition, as well as the intereſt of his grandſon, to his deſire of peace. And the diſcontents of the Engliſh nation obliged the Miniſtry to give way to a treaty. The conferences were held at Gertruydenburgh, and were managed on the part of England by the Duke of Marlborough and the Lord Townſhend, and by the Marquis de Torcy for the French. It ſoon appeared that the Engliſh Plenipotentiaries were not in earneſt, and that the Dutch were wholly guided by the influence of Prince Engene and the Duke of Marlborough, That nobleman found his enemies in England increaſing, and his credit at Court on the wane; and he knew that nothing but a continuation of the war, and new victories, could ſupport his influence in England.

After Lewis had gradually been brought to ſubmit to every article ſpecified in the preliminaries,

naries, the Plenipotentiaries inſiſted upon that Monarch's employing his own troops to expel his grandſon from Spain *, where the fortune of war continued ſtill doubtful. The French King was confounded at theſe inſolent propoſals, which he rejected with diſdain. He even deigned to ſubmit his conduct to the judgement of his ſubjects; his offers were publiſhed, together with the demands of the allies. His people intereſted themſelves in the glory of their Monarch. They exclaimed againſt the cruelty and arrogance of his enemies. Though

* The unreaſonable haughtineſs of Marlborough and the Penſionary of Holland, and the ſeaſonable and ſpirited ſpeech of old Foſcarini to the French Negociators, at Gertruydenburgh, ſaved the Crown of Spain for Philip. "Would you," ſaid that old Trojan, "forſake the Spaniſh Monarchy when you can preſerve it? Make peace or war; do not remain meanly thus in a place that ſuits your dignity ſo little: You have to do with coarſe people, that are unacquainted with generoſity; this brings you nothing but ſhame without profit: You loſe on all ſides. If you are in ſo great want of peace as to make you reſolve to act againſt Philip V. at leaſt make your conditions, and you will certainly obtain Naples and Sicily. Thoſe people are proud, only becauſe they ſee you in an unworthy humiliation; they think themſelves ſtrong, only becauſe you ſhew yourſelves weak; they eſteem themſelves rich, becauſe you own you are beggars; and if you think ſeriouſly about it, you will find that you are not much worſe than they."—*See M. de Torcy's Memoirs.*

impove-

impoveriſhed and half ſtarved by the war, they reſolved to ſpend their whole ſubſtance in his ſupport; and rather to fight his battles without pay, than leave him in the dire neceſſity of complying with ſuch diſhonourable terms. Animated by theſe ſentiments, they made ſuch efforts as amazed the whole world.

While the French were united, and determined to ſupport their Sovereign, and avenge his cauſe on his proud and haughty foes, England was more than ever divided and agitated by the oppoſite Factions: The Tories affirming, that the Whigs were the authors of a ruinous war, which they endeavoured to protract for their own private advantage; and that they were enemies to both the Church and the Monarchy: They maintained the doctrine of paſſive obedience; and cenſured all reſiſtance as a rebellious doctrine, founded upon Anti-monarchical and Republican principles. The Whigs, on the other hand, extolled the Revolution, and magnified the conduct of the then preſent Parliament; and aſſerted, that the Proteſtant ſucceſſion, in the Houſe of Hanover, was in danger from the machinations of the Tories.

During this ferment, Mr Harley, in whom the Queen repoſed her chief confidence, though he had no viſible ſhare in the Adminiſtration *, had entirely alienated her affections from the Ducheſs of Marlborough and the Whig Faction. He inſinuated, that the war, in the end, if continued, muſt prove ruinous to her Majeſty and to her people; and that the Whigs were no friends to the national religion. The Queen, who had long bore with impatience the tyranny of the Ducheſs of Marlborough, was eaſily prevailed with to free herſelf from a Faction by which ſhe had been ſo long kept in dependence. To accompliſh this end, the Whig Miniſtry were removed, and the Adminiſtration placed in the hands of the Tories.

The Earl of Godolphin was diveſted of his office, and the Treaſury put in commiſſion, ſubject to the direction of Mr Harley, who was afterwards created Earl of Oxford, appointed Lord-Treaſurer, and veſted with the ſupreme

* Harley had been diſmiſſed from his office by the deſire of Marlborough. Sir Simon Harcourt, Sir Thomas Manſel, and Mr St John, relinquiſhed their ſeveral poſts upon the diſgrace of Harley.

admini-

adminiſtration of affairs. The Earl of Rocheſter was declared Preſident of the Council, in the room of Lord Somers. The Staff of Lord-Steward being taken from the Duke of Devonſhire, was given to the Duke of Buckingham; and Mr Boyle was removed from the Secretary's Office, to make way for Henry St John. The Lord-Chancellor having reſigned the Great Seal, it was firſt put in commiſſion, and afterwards given to Sir Simon Harcourt. The office of Lord-Chamberlain was transferred from the Duke of Kent to the Duke of Shrewſbury, who had lately voted with the Tories, and maintained an intimacy of correſpondence with Mr Harley. The Earl of Sunderland, Marlborough's ſon-in-law, was diſmiſſed from the poſt of Secretary of State, in which he was ſucceeded by Lord Dartmouth. The Earl of Wharton ſurrendered his commiſſion of Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, which the Queen conferred on the Duke of Ormond; and Mr George Granville was appointed Secretary of War, in the room of Mr Robert Walpole. The Duke of Marlborough retained the command of the army upon the Queen's own terms; but he

was afterwards ſuperſeded by the Duke of Ormond, who was inveſted with the ſupreme command of the land forces. The Earl of Peterborough was appointed Ambaſſador Extraordinary to the Imperial Court: The Earl of Rivers was ſent in the ſame quality to Hanover; and Mr Richard Hill, brother to Mrs Maſham, was nominated Envoy Extraordinary to the United Provinces, in the room of Lieutenant-General Cadogan. The command of the troops in Spain was conferred upon the Duke of Argyle, who had long been at variance with the Duke of Marborough: The command of our forces in Portugal was beſtowed on the Earl of Portmore; ~~and the Duke of Hamilton was appointed Lord-Lieutenant of the county palatine of Lancaſter.~~ The Adminiſtration being thus veſted in the hands of the Tories, the Whig Parliament was diſſolved, after ſuch precautions were taken as could not fail to influence the new elections in favour of the other Party.

The Miniſtry, having ſecured a great majority in the Houſe of Commons, immediately entered into a negociation for peace with the

Court

Court of France, in order to mortify the Whigs and the Dutch, whom they deteſted, and to free their country from an expenſive and ruinous continental war. They knew the Whigs would employ all their art and influence in obſtructing the peace, and in raiſing a popular clamour againſt the treaty. But they hoped to obtain ſuch advantages, in point of commerce, for the ſubjects of Great-Britain, as would ſilence all detraction, and enable them to maintain the ſuperiority which they had acquired in Parliament. As all the powers of the Confederacy, except France, entertained ſentiments very different from the Queen and her Miniſtry, the conferences, which were opened at Utrecht, for negociating the treaty, appeared only to retard the buſineſs of pacification. The Queen had foreſeen the difficulties; and her principal aim had been to free her ſubjects from the miſeries attending an unprofitable war, and reſtore to Europe the bleſſings of peace. At the ſame time, ſhe determined to procure the moſt reaſonable terms of accommodation for her allies, but not to laviſh the blood and treaſure of her ſubjects in ſupporting their extravagant demands.

The

The Emperor Joſeph being dead without male iſſue, and his brother Charles, the Duke of Anjou's competitor for the Crown of Spain, raiſed to the Imperial dignity, the Queen ſaw that the liberties of Europe would be expoſed to much greater danger from an actual union of the Imperial and Spaniſh Crowns in one head of the Houſe of Auſtria, than from a bare poſſibility of Spain's being united with France in one branch of the Houſe of Bourbon: And the dictates of true policy diſſuaded her from contributing to further conqueſts in the kingdom of France, which would have proved the ſource of contention among the Allies, depreſſed the Houſe of Bourbon below that ſtandard of importance which the balance of Europe required it ſhould maintain, and aggrandize the States-General at the expence of Great-Britain.

The powers of the confederacy concurred in oppoſing with all their might any treaty which could not gratify their different views of avarice, intereſt, and ambition. They practiſed a thouſand little artifices to intimidate the Queen, to excite a jealouſy of Lewis, to blacken the characters

racters of her Miniſters, to raiſe and keep up a dangerous ferment among her people, by which her life and government were endangered. She could not fail to reſent theſe efforts, which greatly perplexed her meaſures, and obſtructed her deſign.

Her Miniſters were ſenſible of the dangerous predicament in which they ſtood. The Queen's health was much impaired; and the ſucceſſor countenanced the oppoſite Faction. In caſe of their Sovereign's death, they had nothing to expect but proſecution and ruin for obeying her commands; and they ſaw no hope of ſafety, except in renouncing their principles, and ſubmitting to their adverſaries, or elſe in taking ſuch meaſures as would haſten the pacification, that the troubles of the kingdom might be appeaſed, and the people be ſatisfied with their conduct, before death ſhould deprive them of their Sovereign's protection. With this view they adviſed her to ſet on foot a private negociation with Lewis; to ſtipulate certain advantages for her own ſubjects in a concerted plan of peace; to enter into ſuch mutual confidence with that Monarch, as would anticipate all clandeſtine tranſactions

ſactions to her prejudice, and enable her, in ſome meaſure, to preſcribe terms for her allies. The plan, Dr Smollet ſays very juſtly, was judiciouſly formed, but executed with too much precipitation. The ſtipulated advantages were not ſuch as ſhe had a right to demand and inſiſt upon; and, without all doubt, better might have been obtained, had not the obſtinacy of the allies abroad, and the violent conduct of the Whig faction at home, obliged the Miniſters to relax in ſome points, and haſten the concluſion of the treaty.

The peace, which had been approved by a majority of both Houſes of Parliament, by the city of London, and by all the ſenſible people of the nation who were not particularly intereſted in the proſecution of the war, did not allay the internal diſſentions; the ill humour of party ſtill ſubſiſted, and was daily inflamed by new pamphlets and papers. The Whigs violently exclaimed againſt the treaty; and aſſerted, that a deſign was formed by the Tories to ſecure the Pretender's ſucceſſion to the Throne of Great-Britain. The Tories gloried in having freed

their

their country from a ruinous war*, which had been protracted to ſatiate the avarice, and gratify the ambition of the Whig leaders: and affirmed, that the Whigs had formed a deſign to put down the church.

Notwithſtanding theſe bold aſſertions of the rival parties, it is certain, that the ſtruggle was in the main for power, not principle; and that there was no formal deſign laid, on one ſide, to deſtroy the church, nor, on the other, to ſet aſide the ſucceſſion.

It does not appear that the Queen ever entertained a thought of altering the ſucceſſion as by law eſtabliſhed. She had, in all her ſpeeches to her Parliament, expreſſed her earneſt concern for the ſucceſſion in the Houſe of Hanover; and ſhe obliged the Kings of France and Spain, by the treaty of Utrecht, to abandon the Pretender, and acknowledge her title, and the Proteſtant ſucceſſion.

Some of the Whig, as well as the Tory writers, aſſert, that the principal leaders of theſe fac-

* At the concluſion of this war, the national debt was increaſed from 16,394,701 l. to 53,681,176 l. In thoſe days an enormous ſum indeed.

tions were wholly actuated by ambition, and that neither the Church nor the Proteſtant ſucceſſion were in danger from either of the parties. Bolingbroke affirms, " That there was no deſign on foot during the four laſt years of Queen Anne's reign to ſet aſide the ſucceſſion of the Houſe of Hanover, and to place the Crown on the head of the Pretender to it; nor any party formed for this purpoſe at the time of the death of that Princeſs. That there were particular men, who correſponded indirectly and directly too with the Pretender, and with others for his ſervice; that theſe men profeſſed themſelves to be zealous in it, and made large promiſes, and raiſed ſome faint hopes, I make no doubt; but the ſcheme of defeating the Proteſtant ſucceſſion was ſo far from being laid by the Queen and her Miniſters, that the very men I ſpeak of, when they were preſſed by the other ſide, that is from Verſailles and St Germain's, to be more particular, and to come into a cloſer concert, declined both, and gave the moſt evaſive anſwers." This noble author's aſſertion is corroborated by the teſti-

* Theſe were the Duke of Ormond, the Earls of Marr and Oxford, &c.—See the Duke of Berwick's Memoirs.

teſtimony of the Duke of Berwick, who was as conſpicuous for his veracity, as for his military talents; after reciting ſeveral inſtances of the Earl of Oxford's duplicity, he ſays, "at length, finding the time ſlip away without obtaining any plan from Oxford, and being moreover informed that Queen Anne's health was daily on the decline, I ſuſpected more than ever that the Lord Treaſurer was deceiving us, eſpecially as I knew he had written to the Elector of Hanover, and had juſt ſent his couſin Harley to that court. I therefore opened myſelf upon this point to M. de Torcy, through whom all my correſpondence with Gautier and Oxford was carried on. He agreed with me, that the Lord Treaſurer's conduct was very extraordinary; and we reſolved to write to him, to repreſent that, as Queen Anne's death might happen very ſhortly, it was neceſſary he ſhould inform us what meaſures he had taken in that caſe to ſecure the intereſt of***†, as well as the ſteps that Prince ought to take. His anſwer was, that if the Queen were to die, the affairs of ***, and their own, were ruined without reſource. This was all we ever

† The Pretender.

could get out of him, which was a clear proof that he impoſed upon us; and that his only motive in all the advances he had hitherto made to us, had been his own intereſt in endeavouring to join the Jacobites with the Tories, and by that means ſecuring to himſelf a majority in Parliament, that the peace might be approved*. As ſoon as he had compaſſed this end, he thought of nothing but to be upon good terms with the Houſe of Hanover"†. This is evident, as the capital proſecution of Oxford by the Whigs, for the hand he had in the peace, was ſecretly diſapproved of by King George, and dropped.

After the famous treaty of Utrecht, ſo much extolled by the one party, and ſo much exclaimed againſt by the other, had received the ſanction of the Parliament, the diſſentions amongſt the Miniſtry were carried on with as much rancour and animoſity as thoſe between the factions. Oxford the Lord Treaſurer, and Bolingbroke

* Bolingbroke's obſervation relative to this correſpondence is very ſtriking and juſt. Oxford, he ſays, had ſome private intrigue for himſelf at Hanover: ſo he had at Bar, (where the Pretender reſided). He was the bubble of one in the end: the Pretender was ſo of the other.

† See the Duke of Berwick's Memoirs,

broke Secretary of State, were competitors for power, and rivals in reputation for ability. The Treaſurer's parts were deemed the more ſolid; the Secretary's more ſhining; but both Miniſters were aſpiring and ambitious. The intereſt of Bolingbroke was ſupported by Lady Maſham the favourite, the Duke of Shrewſbury, Lord Chamberlain, Sir Simon Harcourt, the Chancellor, Sir William Wyndham, Mr Secretary Bromely, and many other Tories, and by all the Jacobites. The latter party flattered themſelves, that the Queen in ſecret favoured the pretenſions of her brother, and they depended upon Bolingbroke's attachment to the ſame intereſt. Though he had never explained himſelf upon this ſubject, he was ſuppoſed to favour the heir of blood, and known to be an implacable enemy to the Whigs, who were the moſt zealous advocates for the Proteſtant ſucceſſion. They promiſed themſelves much from his affection, but more from his reſentment; and they believed the majority of the Tories would join them on the ſame maxims.

The Secretary, thus powerfully ſupported, affected to ſet both his rival and the Whigs at defiance.

fiance. He profeſſed a warm zeal for the Church: he ſoothed the Queen's affections with the moſt aſſiduous attention. He inſinuated that the Treaſurer was biaſſed in favour of the Diſſentors; that he had invited the Duke of Marlborough to return from his voluntary exile; and acted as a ſpy for the Houſe of Hanover.

So great was Bolingbroke's paſſion for power, that he adopted more criminal meaſures than thoſe he charged the Treaſurer with. He not only formed the deſign of a coalition with the Duke of Marlborough, who at that very time embarked at Oſtend for England, but he correſponded with the Duke of Berwick, at leaſt ſome of his party did, in order to prevail with the Queen to remove Oxford*.

The Tories, by whom the Treaſurer had riſen, expected much from him; but their expectations were ill anſwered. The Jacobites in particular had been fed with hopes of ſeeing the ſucceſſion altered. Theſe hopes he had conveyed to them in a diſtant, undeterminate, and myſterious manner, without any other view than that of preventing them from taking violent meaſures to embarraſs his adminiſtration.

At

* See the Duke of Berwick's Memoirs.

At leaſt, if he actually entertained at one time any other deſign, he had, long before his diſgrace, laid it wholly aſide, probably from an apprehenſion of the danger with which it muſt have been attended, and ſeemed bent upon making a merit of his zeal for the Houſe of Hanover: but his conduct was ſo equivocal and unſteady, that he ruined himſelf in the opinion of one party, without acquiring the confidence of the other.

To ſupport his tottering adminiſtration, ſays Bolingbroke, "he coaxed and perſecuted Whigs, he flattered and diſappointed Tories. To that Party he held out the peace, as an æra when all they expected ſhould be done for them, and when they ſhould be placed in ſuch fulneſs of power and ſuch ſtrength of party, that it would be more the intereſt of the ſucceſſor to be well with them, than theirs to be well with him. Such expreſſions were often made, and others of like import: And I believe," adds he, "theſe oracular ſpeeches were interpreted, as oracles uſed to be, according as every man's inclinations led him." Be this as it may, the Treaſurer, perceiving his party deſerting

ſerting him, and his influence in the wane, made advances towards a reconciliation with Marlborough and the leaders of the Whig faction, but met with a refuſal from the Duke, on account of the implacable reſentment which the Ducheſs had conceived againſt him; and was ſoon after diſmiſſed from all his employments. Bolingbroke, upon the fall of his rival, laid his account with being appointed chief Miniſter; but all his ſchemes of power were defeated by the promotion of the Duke of Shrewſbury to the office of Treaſurer; and all his hopes blaſted by the death of the Queen, on whoſe perſonal favour he depended.

A. D. 1714.

Upon this event, the Tories, who had no other objection to the ſucceſſion in the Houſe of Hanover, but the fear of ſeeing the Whig faction once more predominant, found themſelves without a head, divided, diſtracted, and irreſolute: But, upon recollection, they ſaw nothing ſo eligible as ſilence and ſubmiſſion to thoſe meaſures which they could not oppoſe with any proſpect of ſucceſs. The Jacobites, who had always expreſſed their attachment to the

the Pretender, and aſſerted that the eſtabliſhment of the Houſe of Hanover would be the eſtabliſhment of the Whig Party, and that the intereſt of Great-Britain would be conſtantly ſacrificed to foreign intereſts, and her wealth drained to ſupport them under that family, were eager, impatient, and alarmed at a juncture, which, with reſpect to them, was truly critical. Such was the divided ſtate of the Tory party at the death of their Royal Miſtreſs.

"The Whigs, on the other hand," ſays Bolingbroke, "were well united, and determined to their future, as well as their preſent objects. They had appeared zealous for the Proteſtant ſucceſſion from the time when King William had propoſed it, after the death of the Duke of Glouceſter. The Tories voted for it then; and the acts that were judged neceſſary to ſecure it, ſome of them at leaſt, were promoted by them. Yet they were not thought to be extremely fond of it; neither did King William come into this meaſure, till he found, upon trial, that there was no other ſafe and practicable: And the Tories had an air of coming into it for no other reaſon. Thus far

the Whigs acted like a National Party, who thought that their religion and liberty could be ſecured by no other expedient, and therefore adhered to this ſettlement of the Crown with diſtinguiſhed zeal. But this National Party degenerated ſoon into faction; that is, the national intereſt became ſoon a ſecondary and ſubſervient motive, and the cauſe of the ſucceſſion was ſupported more for the ſake of the party or faction, than for the ſake of the nation; and with views that went more directly to the eſtabliſhment of their own adminiſtration, than to a ſolid ſettlement of the preſent Royal Family."

Such were the views of the Whig Party at the death of the Queen; and they appeared very plain in the reign of her ſucceſſor, King George the Firſt, who, by virtue of the Act of Succeſſion, aſcended the Throne of Great-Britain, without the leaſt oppoſition, tumult, or ſign of popular diſcontent; and the unprejudiced part of the nation was fully perſuaded, that no deſign had ever been concerted by Queen Anne and her Miniſtry in favour of the Pretender.

The

The King, who was ſtrongly prepoſſeſſed in favour of the Whigs, inſtead of uniting and conciliating the affections of a divided people, by diſtinguiſhing only thoſe who were of ſuperior birth and merit, and even employing ſome of the chief leaders of the Tories in his Miniſtry, began his reign by removing the whole of that Party from all offices of honour and advantage, ~~under the Government.~~

The Duke of Ormond was diſmiſſed from his command, which the King reſtored to the Duke of Marlborough, whom he likewiſe appointed Colonel of the Firſt Regiment of Foot Guards, and Maſter of the Ordnance. The Great Seal was given to Lord Cowper; the Privy Seal to the Earl of Wharton; the Government of Ireland to the Earl of Sunderland. The Duke of Devonſhire was made Steward of the Houſehold; Lord Townſhend and Mr Stanhope were appointed Secretaries of State: The poſt of Secretary for Scotland was beſtowed upon the Duke of Montroſe. The Duke of Somerſet was conſtituted Maſter of the Horſe; the Duke of St Alban's Captain of the band of Penſioners; and the Duke of Argyle Com-

mander in Chief of the forces in Scotland. Mr Pulteney became Secretary at War; and Mr Walpole, who had formerly been expelled the Houſe of Commons for corrupt practices, and who had at this period undertaken to manage the Commons, was gratified with the double place of Paymaſter to the Army and to Chelſea Hoſpital. A new Council was appointed, and the Earl of Nottingham declared Preſident: But all affairs of conſequence were concerted by a Cabinet Council or Junto, compoſed of the Duke of Marlborough, the Earls of Nottingham and Sunderland, the Lords Hallifax, Townſhend, Somers, and General Stanhope. The Miniſtry being thus arranged, and compoſed of the Whig leaders, his Majeſty diſſolved the Tory Parliament that had ſo unanimouſly acknowledged him.

Uncommon vigour was, as uſual, exerted on both ſides in the elections; but, by dint of the monied intereſt, which prevailed in moſt of the corporations through the kingdom, and the countenance of the Miniſtry, which will always have weight with needy and venal electors, a great majority of Whigs was returned both in England and Scotland.

The

The Whig Miniſtry, having thus engroſſed the whole power of the Government, and obtained a vaſt majority in Parliament, let looſe the whole fury of party upon their political adverſaries, and proſcribed every man in the kingdom who did not bear the name of Whig. They impeached the Duke of Ormond, the Earls of Strafford and Oxford, Lord Bolingbroke, and all thoſe who had been principally concerned in negociating the Treaty of Utrecht, of high treaſon, and other high crimes and miſdemeanors. The impeachment of theſe Noblemen, who had a number of friends and adherents both in and out of Parliament, was diſagreeable to a great part of the nation; and his Majeſty's ſtrong prepoſſeſſions againſt the Tories, who conſtituted ſuch a conſiderable part of his ſubjects, increaſed the popular diſcontent. The clamour of the Church's being in danger was revived; jealouſies were excited; ſeditious libels were diſperſed; and dangerous tumults raiſed in different parts of the kingdom. Thus the violent meaſures of the Miniſtry kindled ſuch a flame of diſcontent in the nation, as encouraged the partiſans of the Chevalier

valier de St George to hazard a revolt. "To theſe meaſures of unexpected violence alone," ſays Bolingbroke, "it muſt be aſcribed, that the Pretender had any party for him of ſtrength ſufficient to appear and act. Theſe meaſures alone produced the troubles that followed, and dyed the royal ermines of a Prince, no way ſanguinary, ~~in blood.~~" The ſame author adds, "That the very manner in which this rebellion was begun, ſhews abundantly, that it was a ſtart of paſſion, a ſudden frenzy of men tranſported by their reſentment, and nothing leſs than the execution of a deſign long premeditated and prepared." This is confirmed by the Duke of Berwick, who ſays, "That the Earl of Marr, who had been Secretary of State for Scotland in the time of Queen Anne, and had been removed from that poſt by George, received, in the month of September, a ſecret order from ***† to go immediately into Scotland, and take up arms. Neither Bolingbroke nor I knew any thing of this, although we were his principal Miniſters, through whom all the cor-

† The Pretender.

reſpondences

reſpondences in England, and all the plans, paſſed. This circumſtance," adds the Duke, "gave us no favourable opinion of the enterprize, ſince there would have been nothing concerted without our knowledge." The iſſue of the enterprize verified the Marſhall's prediction. It is well known, that the rebellion, which had been conducted with little judgment, and ſupported by a very few noblemen of any power or influence in the Kingdom, was ſoon ſuppreſſed. But after it was extinguiſhed, the flame of national diſſatisfaction ſtill continued to rage. And the ſeverities which, by the ſuggeſtions of a vindictive Miniſtry, had been exerciſed againſt the Rebels, increaſed the general diſcontent. This afforded a pretext to the Miniſtry for bringing in a bill to repeal the triennial act, and by a new law to extend the term of Parliament to ſeven years, in order to eſtabliſh and perpetuate their dominion over the oppoſite faction.

The motion for this bill was introduced into the Houſe of Lords by the Duke of Devonſhire, who repreſented, that triennial elections ſerved to keep up party diviſions; to raiſe and foment feuds in private families; to produce ruinous expences,

expences, and give occaſion to the cabals and intrigues of foreign Princes: That it became the wiſdom of ſuch an auguſt Aſſembly to apply proper remedies to an evil that might be attended with the moſt dangerous conſequences, eſpecially in the preſent temper of the nation, as the ſpirit of rebellion ſtill remained unconquered. He therefore propoſed a bill for the enlarging the continuance of Parliaments. He was ſeconded by the Earls of Dorſet and Rockingham, the Duke of Argyle, the Lord Townſhend, and the other chiefs of the party. The motion was oppoſed by the Earls of Nottingham, Abingdon, Pawlet, &c. &c. Thoſe Patriots juſtly obſerved, "That frequent Parliaments were required by the fundamental conſtitution of the kingdom, aſcertained in the practice of many ages: That the members of the Lower Houſe were choſen by the people for a certain term of years, at the expiration of which they would be no longer repreſentatives of the people, who, by the Parliament's protracting its own authority, would be deprived of the only remedy which they have againſt thoſe, who, through ignorance or corruption, betrayed the truſt repoſed in them: That the

the reaſons in favour of ſuch a bill were weak and frivolous: That with reſpect to foreign alliances, no Prince or State would reaſonably depend upon a people to defend their liberties, who ſhould be thought to have given up ſo great a part of their own: Nor would it be prudent in them to wiſh for a change in that conſtitution under which Europe had of late been ſo powerfully ſupported. On the contrary, they might be deterred from entering into any engagements with Great-Britain, when informed by the preamble of the bill, that the Popiſh faction was ſo dangerous as to threaten deſtruction to the Government: They would apprehend that the Adminiſtration was ſo weak as to want ſo extraordinary a proviſion for its ſafety: That the gentlemen of Britain were not to be truſted: And, that the good affections of the people were reſtrained within the limits of the Houſe of Commons.

They affirmed that this bill, far from preventing the expence of elections, would rather increaſe it, and encourage every practice of corruption: for, the value of a ſeat would always be in proportion to the duration of a Parliament; and the purchaſe would riſe accordingly. That

a long Parliament would yield a greater temptation, as well as a better opportunity to a vicious Miniſtry, to corrupt the Members, than they could poſſibly have when the Parliaments were ſhort and frequent; that the ſame reaſons urged for paſſing the bill to continue this Parliament for ſeven years, would be at leaſt as ſtrong, and by the conduct of the Miniſtry, might be made much ſtronger before the end of that term, for continuing and even perpetuating their legiſlative power, to the abſolute ſubverſion of the third eſtate of the realm." Notwithſtanding theſe arguments were conſtitutional and unanſwerable, the bill for Septennial Parliaments paſſed by a great majority, though twenty Peers entered a proteſt. It met with the ſame fate in the Houſe of Commons, where many ſtrong objections were ſtarted to no purpoſe.

From this faithful narration of facts the reader hath ſeen, that, in the reign of King William the Third, the Whigs and Tories, animated by the ſpirit of liberty, boldly aſſerted and re-eſtabliſhed the rights and liberties of the people, which had been often violated in former reigns; and, by eſtabliſhing Triennial Parliaments, not only

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ſtripped the Crown of an uſurped prerogative, but brought our conſtitution nearer to its original principles; and that, at the acceſſion of King George the Firſt, the Whig Miniſtry, under the pretence of providing for the diſtemper of the times, but in reality to eſtabliſh their own Adminiſtration, ſubverted the original principles of the Government, and infringed the rights of the people, by reſtraining that elective power which is the foundation of their liberty. They did not conſider that the power they were raiſing would govern them and their poſterity with the very rod of iron they forged, and would be the power of a Prince or Miniſter, not that of a party. ~~long.~~

In conſequence of the Septennial Act, the repreſentatives of the people, from being deputies in a State, formed upon the common rights and intereſts of mankind, are become principals; and controul the creative power from whence they derive their authority.

This is acting upon the ſame principle by which the ancient Romans loſt their liberty. The ~~intelligent~~ reader knows, that two Conſuls were choſen annually at Rome, and the Procon-

ſular power in the government of provinces was limited to a year. The ruling faction of thoſe times, under the ſpecious pretext of preſerving the tranquillity of the city, and of giving ſtrength and weight to the arms and counſels of the Commonwealth, prevailed with the people to diſpenſe with theſe inſtitutions, in favour of Pompey and Cæſar. What was the conſequence of this innovation in their form of Government? The Pyrates were extirpated, the price of corn was reduced, Spain was held in ſubjection, Gaul was conquered, the Germans were repulſed, Rome triumphed, her government flouriſhed; but her conſtitution was deſtroyed, her liberty was loſt.

In all limited governments there are fundamentals which the legiſlative power cannot alter; the rights and privileges of the people being one of theſe fundamentals among the Engliſh, no power can legally take them away without the conſent of every perſon who has a right to elect, and be repreſented in Parliament. The legiſlative, in our conſtitution, is a ſupreme, and may be called, in one ſenſe, an abſolute, but in none an arbitrary power. "It is," ſays Locke, "limited to the public good of ſociety. It is a power

power that hath no other end but preſervation, and therefore can never have a right to deſtroy, enſlave, or deſignedly impoveriſh the ſubjects; for the obligations of the law of nature ceaſe not ſociety."

The legiſlative authority is confined to act within the line of the conſtitution; and not to break through it. Becauſe the Houſe of Commons is only veſted with a truſt by the people, to the end they may protect and defend them in their rights and privileges. And, therefore, it is a contradiction in terms, to ſay, they have a right to conſent to a law that may reſtrain, or deſtroy them. And I may venture to affirm, that whenever the repreſentatives of the people in any State ſhall uſurp a power to reſtrain or deſtroy thoſe rights from whence they derive their authority, that State is verging towards deſtruction.

The Preſident Monteſquieu, in his Spirit of Laws, after having explained the principles of the Engliſh Conſtitution, adds, "As all things have an end, the State we are ſpeaking of will loſe its liberty; it will periſh. Have not Rome, Sparta, and Carthage, periſhed? It will

will periſh when the legiſlative power ſhall be more corrupted than the executive." Without doubt, ſooner or later, the Britiſh empire muſt experience a ſimilar fate to all thoſe mighty ſtates and empires that have preceded her. When the integrity of Parliament, that palladium which protects her, is once removed, ſhe will then become an eaſy prey to her enemies. It is certain, that Parliaments ought to be the true guardians of liberty; for this principally they were inſtituted; and this is the principal article of that great and noble truſt, which the collective body of the people of Great-Britain repoſes in the Repreſentative. But then no ſlavery can be ſo effectually fixed upon us, as parliamentary ſlavery. By the corruption of Parliament, and the abſolute influence of a Miniſter on the two Houſes, we return into that ſtate, to deliver or ſecure us from which, Parliaments were inſtituted, and are really governed by the arbitrary will of one man.

In order therefore to ſecure the independence of Parliament againſt corruption, for it is no longer in danger of being awed by prerogative; to do juſtice to an injured people, and

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to draw the Conſtitution back to the principles on which it was originally founded,—the Septennial Bill ought to be repealed, and Annual, or at leaſt Triennial, Parliaments re-eſtabliſhed, as they not only form the baſis of our Government, but are leſs liable to corruption than Septennial Parliaments.

To ſtrengthen the arguments which have already been adduced in ſupport of a repeal of this unconſtitutional act, I ſhall tranſcribe that excellent ſpeech delivered by Sir William Wyndham in the Houſe of Commons, during the adminiſtration of that grand corrupter, Sir Robert Walpole. "Let us ſuppoſe," ſaid that incorruptible Patriot, "a man abandoned to all notions of virtue and honour, of no great family, and but a mean fortune, raiſed to be chief Miniſter of State, by the concurrence of many whimſical events; afraid or unwilling to truſt any but creatures of his own making; loſt to all ſenſe of ſhame and reputation; ignorant of his country's true intereſt; purſuing no aim but that of aggrandizing himſelf and his favourites; in foreign affairs, truſting none but thoſe who, from the nature of their education,

cannot

cannot poſſibly be qualified for the ſervice of their country, or give weight and credit to their negociations. Let us ſuppoſe the true intereſt of the nation, by ſuch means, neglected or miſunderſtood, her honour tarniſhed, her importance loſt, her trade inſulted, her merchants plundered, and her ſailors murdered; and all theſe circumſtances overlooked, leſt his adminiſtration ſhould be endangered. Suppoſe him next poſſeſſed of immenſe wealth, the plunder of the nation; with a Parliament chiefly compoſed of Members whoſe ſeats are purchaſed, and whoſe votes are bought at the expence of the public treaſure. In ſuch a Parliament, ſuppoſe all attempts made to enquire into his conduct, or to relieve the nation from the diſtreſs which has been entailed upon it by his adminiſtration. Suppoſe him ſcreened by a majority of his creatures, whom he retains in daily pay, or engages in his particular intereſt, by diſtributing among them thoſe poſts and places which ought never to be beſtowed upon any, but for the good of the public. Let him plume himſelf upon his ſcandalous victory, becauſe he has obtained a Parliament, like a

packed

packed jury, ready to acquit him at all adventures. Let us ſuppoſe him domineering with inſolence over all the men of ancient families, over all the men of ſenſe, figure, or fortune, in the nation; as he has no virtue of his own, ridiculing it in others, and endeavouring to deſtroy or currupt it in all. With ſuch a Miniſter and ſuch a Parliament, let us ſuppoſe a caſe which, I hope, will never happen: A Prince upon the Throne, uninformed, ignorant, and unacquainted with the inclinations and true intereſts of his people; weak, capricious, tranſported with unbounded ambition, and poſſeſſed with inſatiable avarice. I hope ſuch a caſe will never occur; but as it poſſibly may, could any greater curſe happen to a nation, than ſuch a Prince on the Throne, adviſed, and ſolely adviſed, by ſuch a Miniſter, and that Miniſter ſupported by ſuch a Parliament? The nature of mankind cannot be altered by human laws; the exiſtence of ſuch a Prince or ſuch a Miniſter, we cannot prevent by act of Parliament; but the exiſtence of ſuch a Parliament, I think, we may prevent; as it is much more likely to exiſt, and may do more

miſchief, while the Septennial law remains in force, than if it was repealed; therefore I am heartily for its being repealed."

Notwithſtanding the moſt warm, the moſt nervous, the moſt pathetic remonſtrances in favour of the motion for a repeal of the Septennial Bill, the queſtion was put, and it was ſuppreſſed by the influence of a ſelfiſh Miniſter operating upon a corrupt Houſe of Commons. This ſpeech not only exhibits a ſtriking picture of Walpole's corrupt, weak, and puſillanimous adminiſtration; but contains ſolid and invincible arguments againſt long Parliaments.

I ſhall now proceed to enumerate ſome of the evils produced by Septennial Parliaments. I ſhall begin with thoſe mentioned by Sir John Hynde Cotton, that conſtant aſſertor of the liberties of his country, during the debates in the Houſe of Commons, with regard to a motion made for bringing in a bill to repeal the Septennial Act.

The arguments for and againſt Septennial Parliaments having been often ſtated, the adherents of the Miniſter, Walpole, at that time inſiſted upon the increaſe of Papiſts and Jacobites,

bites, which rendered it dangerous to weaken the hands of Government: They challenged the Oppoſition to produce one inſtance in which the leaſt encroachment had been made on the liberties of the people, ſince the Septennial Act took place; and they defied the moſt ingenious malice to prove, that his Majeſty had ever endeavoured to extend any branch of the prerogative beyond its legal bounds.

"With reſpect to his Majeſty's conduct," Sir John Hynde Cotton ſaid, "he would not anſwer one word; but as to the grievances introduced ſince the law was enacted for Septennial Parliaments, he thought himſelf more at liberty to declare his ſentiments." He aſſerted, "That the Septennial Act itſelf was an encroachment upon the rights of the people; a law paſſed by a Parliament that made itſelf Septennial." He obſerved, "That the laws of treaſon, with regard to trials, were altered ſince that period; that in former times a man was tried by a jury of his neighbours, within the county where the crimes alledged againſt him were ſaid to be committed; but by an act of a Septennial Parliament, he might be re-

moved, and tried in any place where the Crown, or rather the Miniſtry, could find a jury proper for their purpoſe; where the priſoner could not bring any witneſs in his juſtification, without an expence which, perhaps, his circumſtances could not bear." He aſked, "If the Riot Act was not an encroachment on the rights of the people? An Act, by which a little dirty juſtice of the peace, the meaneſt and vileſt tool a Miniſter can uſe, who perhaps ſubſiſts by being in the commiſſion, and may be deprived of that ſubſiſtence at the pleaſure of his patron, had it in his power to put twenty or thirty of the beſt ſubjects in England to immediate death, without any trial or form, but that of reading a proclamation. Was not the fatal South-Sea ſcheme," ſaid he, "eſtabliſhed by the act of a Septennial Parliament? And can any man aſk, whether that law was attended with any inconvenience?"

To this glorious catalogue, I ſhall take the liberty to add the act ſubjecting all dramatic writings to the inſpection of a licenſer; the bill for the better management of the Eaſt-India Company's affairs; the Exciſe laws; our expenſive

penſive and ruinous European continental wars; and our diſtant, ideal, and pernicious conqueſts,—eſtabliſhed, ſupported, and carried on, by Septennial Parliaments.

The act ſubjecting all dramatic writings to the inſpection of a licenſer, by which a fatal ſtroke was given to the liberty of the preſs, the moſt valuable privilege of a free people, was paſſed during the adminiſtration of Sir Robert Walpole. The errors of his conduct, the myſtery of that corruption which he had ſo ſucceſsfully reduced to a ſyſtem, and all the blemiſhes of his adminiſtration, having been expoſed and ridiculed, not only in political periodical writings produced by the moſt eminent hands, but likewiſe in a ſucceſſion of theatrical pieces, which met with uncommon ſucceſs among the people, he brought a bill into Parliament to limit the number of play-houſes, to ſubject all dramatic writers to the inſpection of the Lord Chamberlain, and compel them to take out a licenſe for every production before it could appear on the ſtage.

In the courſe of the debates upon this famous bill, the Earl of Cheſterfield diſtinguiſhed himſelf

ſelf by an excellent ſpeech, that will ever endear his character to all the friends of genius and literature, to all thoſe who are warmed with zeal for the liberties of their country. "Our ſtage, ſaid he, ought certainly to be kept within due bounds, but, for this purpoſe, our laws as they ſtand at preſent are ſufficient. If our ſtage-players at any time exceed thoſe bounds, they ought to be proſecuted, they may be puniſhed. We have precedents, we have examples of perſons puniſhed for things leſs criminal than ſome pieces which have been lately repreſented: a new law muſt therefore be unneceſſary; and in the preſent caſe it cannot be unneceſſary without being dangerous. Every unneceſſary reſtraint is a fetter upon the legs, is a ſhackle upon the hands of liberty. One of the greateſt bleſſings we enjoy, one of the greateſt bleſſings a people can enjoy, is liberty. But every good in this life has its allay of evil. Licentiouſneſs is the allay of liberty. It is an ebulition, an excreſcence; it is a ſpeck upon the eye of the political body, which I can never touch but with a gentle—with a trembling hand, leſt I deſtroy

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the body; leſt I injure the eye upon which it is apt to appear. If the ſtage becomes at any time licentious, if a play appears to be a libel upon the Government, or upon any particular man, the King's courts are open, the law is ſufficient to puniſh the offender. If poets and players are to be reſtrained, let them be reſtrained as other ſubjects are, by the known laws of their country; if they offend, let them be tried as every Engliſhman ought to be, by God and their country. Do not let us ſubject them to the arbitrary will and pleaſure of any man. A power lodged in the hands of a ſingle man to judge and determine without limitation, control or appeal, is a ſort of power unknown to our laws, inconſiſtent with our conſtitution. It is a higher, a more abſolute power than we truſt to the King himſelf; and, therefore, I muſt think, we ought not to truſt any ſuch power in his Majeſty's Lord Chamberlain." His arguments had no effect, though the Houſe admired his elocution; and the bill paſſed into a law by the influence of a Miniſter, whoſe whole power was founded upon bribery and corruption.

The Bill for the better regulation of the Eaſt India

India Company's affairs was the act of a Septennial Parliament; and certainly every unprejudiced and diſintereſted perſon muſt acknowledge, that it is an encroachment upon the rights of private property: that it is a dangerous innovation in the conſtitution, by confounding the powers of Government, and giving to the legiſlative a part of the executive power: that it is derogatory to the honour of the Sovereign, by inveſting certain of his ſubjects with dignity and power equal to his. And that it gives ſuch an immenſe weight of power and influence not only to the preſent, but to a future adminiſtration, as may, under a weak Prince, and a wicked and ambitious Miniſter, ſubvert the laws and the conſtitution of this country.

The exciſe laws, many of which owe their exiſtence, as well as extenſion, to the Septennial Act, are dangerous to liberty, as they undermine the trial by jury, the birth-right of every Briton: as they have produced an additional ſwarm of exciſe officers appointed and paid by the treaſury, and conſequently multiplied the dependents on the Miniſtry: As they have ſubjected a great part of the community to new, un-

unknown, and perplexed laws, and to the tribunal of commiſſioners appointed by the Crown, removeable at pleaſure; and therefore arbitrary in their nature, and inconſiſtent with the principles of liberty, and the Britiſh Conſtitution.

I muſt here obſerve, that many of our penal laws, enacted by a Septennial Parliament, are likewiſe inconſiſtent with liberty. By theſe the uſe of juries is, in certain caſes, annihilated, and a diſcretionary power of impriſoning, fining, and puniſhing, granted to Juſtices of the Peace; a power with which individuals, however reſpectable, ought never to be inveſted.

The Corporation and Teſt Acts, thoſe ſhackles upon civil and religious liberty, though not entailed upon us by a Septennial Parliament, have too long ſtood unrepealed by a legiſlature, which boaſts of being founded upon the principles of liberty and the common rights and intereſts of mankind.

Our deſtructive European continental wars, undertaken to maintain that chimera the balance of power, or rather to ſupport the intereſts of mercenary and ungrateful allies, and the immenſe and diſgraceful ſubſidies paid, in time of

peace as well as in war, to thoſe allies, and that rage of conqueſt for the ſake of extending our dominions and commerce, with which we have been ſo long infatuated, have been chiefly owing to the ambition and avarice of our Miniſtry, abetted by a corrupt majority of a Septennial Parliament.

Though the national debt at preſent does not exceed two hundred and fifty millions*, yet the people of Great-Britain have expended almoſt double that ſum in carrying on their wars, and preſerving their conqueſts.

In order to defray the annual expences of the Government, and the intereſt of that enormous load of debt, the legiſlature has been obliged to hamper trade and navigation with many grievous impoſitions, and to multiply taxes almoſt without number upon all the neceſſaries, as well as luxuries of life; and this unavoidable meaſure has undoubtedly weakened every principle of our internal ſtrength.

It may be ſaid, and perhaps juſtly, that, during the preſent century, our wealth and commerce

* Some writers affirm, that the public debt amounts to 60,000,000l.

merce have increaſed in proportion to the exigencies of the State.

But if we continue, through the courſe of the next century, to take an active part in all diſputes that happen on the Continent of Europe, to extend our conqueſts and depredations through every quarter of the globe, and augment our debt to the immenſe ſum of five hundred millions, can it be expected that our wealth and our commerce will increaſe in proportion to the neceſſities of the Government? Certainly it cannot. As Dr Smollet obſerves, "when the tide of traffick has flowed to its higheſt mark, it will then begin to recede in a gradual ebb, until it has ſhrunk within the narrow limits of its original channel." How ſoon the tide of our commerce will flow to that mark above which it cannot poſſibly riſe, it is not for me to ſay. But whoever reads, with any degree of attention, the hiſtory of the ancients, will find, that war and conqueſts have been the principal cauſes of the decline of induſtry and commerce, and of the fall of States and Empires. The hiſtory of Rome and Carthage affords a ſtriking proof of the truth of this aſſertion.

Monteſquieu very judiciouſly obſerves, "that the Romans were ambitious from the luſt of domination—The Carthaginians from the luſt of gain." The former, it is certain, fought for conqueſt and dominion; and the latter looked upon war as a means of acquiring wealth by extending their dominions and commerce.

The Romans, in the early ages of their Republic, by means of frugality and induſtry, and by the force of that part of their conſtitution, which formed the whole body of the people into a militia, not only procured a comfortable ſubſiſtence, but were enabled to ſubdue Italy without bringing any burden on the State. But when a thirſt of glory, a luſt of dominion and avarice, impelled them to extend their conqueſts over a conſiderable part of the world, the ſpirit of induſtry declined, in proportion as the military gained the aſcendant. This warlike ſpirit of the Romans indiſpoſed them for agriculture, manufactures, and commerce; and their notions of conqueſt and of glory rendered them extravagant, prodigal, and vain. Rome became the theatre of pleaſure, as well as the ſeat of empire; whither all who wiſhed

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to act a part on the ſtage of ambition, popularity, or politics; all who wanted to engage in ſcenes of debauchery, or intrigues of ſtate; all, in ſhort, who had any thing to ſpend, or any thing to expect,—reſorted, as to a common mart. Both the tribute and the plunder of the provinces were imported into this imperial city, and there quickly ſpent; and whatever riches a few grandees, the leaders of armies, the governors of provinces, the minions of the populace, or the harpies of oppreſſion, might have amaſſed together, the great body of the people were immerſed in debt, and miſerable beyond expreſſion,—eagerly wiſhing for a new war, as the only means of repairing their deſperate fortunes. Thus the Romans, inſtead of reaping any advantage from their wars and conqueſts, were beggared by them: And the ſame conqueſts, which raiſed the Republic to the ſummit of her grandeur, brought on her final ruin.

Before the conqueſt of Aſia, the love of glory, and a contempt of wealth, were the ruling paſſions of the Romans. After that period, money was the only object of their deſire. Before, ambition impelled them to war,

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from a thirſt of dominion; now, avarice, for the ſake of plunder, to ſupport the expence of luxury. Before, they ſeemed a race of heroes; they were now a gang of inſatiable robbers. They fleeced the provinces, and oppreſſed their friends as well as their foes. The moſt ſucceſsful generals no longer looked upon themſelves as ſervants, but as maſters of the Republic; and each endeavoured to ſupport his pretenſions by force of arms. In ſhort, this mighty empire fell in pieces at laſt by its own weight, and by faction, avarice, pride, revenge, ſelfiſhneſs, a total diſregard to the public good, and an univerſal diſſoluteneſs of manners among all ranks of people.

Carthage, once the moſt powerful maritime, as well as commercial State, in the world, and the moſt formidable rival Rome ever had to contend with, owed the loſs of her trade, and her total ruin, more to her European continental wars, and her inteſtine diviſions, than to the arms of the Romans.

As her citizens were entirely devoted to commerce, and conſiſted chiefly in unarmed and undiſciplined tradeſmen, ſhe was obliged to employ

employ mercenary troops to carry on her wars. During the firſt ages of the Republic, the Carthaginians applied their wealth to the ſupport of their marine, and to the enlarging and protecting their African dominions. Their indefatigable induſtry, their extenſive trade, and their opulence ariſing therefrom, acquired them the ſovereignty of the ſea, and enabled them to extend their conqueſts over a conſiderable part of Africa. But the ambition of the Carthaginians grew as their wealth increaſed; and by graſping at too much, they loſt all. Stimulated with a deſire of extending their dominions and commerce, they ſent numerous armies into Spain, in order to erect an empire on the continent of Europe. The immenſe ſums which they ſquandered away in ſubſidies to foreign Princes, to ſupport ſuch numerous armies of foreign mercenaries, which they conſtantly kept in pay to compleat the reduction of Spain, would have enabled them to have covered their coaſts with ſuch a fleet, as would have ſecured them from any apprehenſions of foreign invaſions. The Romans, at the beginning of the firſt Punic war, were ſo ſenſible of the want of

a marine force, that they never reſted till they had built a formidable fleet, and acquired the ſuperiority at ſea. This ſuperiority, which they always maintained, enabled them to invade Africa; as the Carthaginians expended that money in carrying on a continental war for their favourite object, the reduction of Spain, which would have put their marine on ſo formidable a footing, as to have enabled them to regain and preſerve the dominion of the ſea, and to repel the hoſtile attempts of their perfidious rivals.

Thus the Carthaginians, by engaging in too frequent and too expenſive wars on the continent of Europe, and by neglecting their marine, not only loſt their trade, but brought themſelves to the very brink of ruin; and their Republic, by the envy and jealouſy of the Hannonian faction, which deprived them of all the fruits of Hannibal's amazing victories, fell at laſt a prey to the inſatiable ambition and perfidy of the daſtardly Romans.

Warned by the fall of thoſe once-mighty rival States, we ought to learn to guard againſt the ſpirit of conqueſt; as the tranquilli-

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ty and ſtrength of Rome and Carthage, and all thoſe ſtates and empires which have preceded us, decreaſed in proportion as they were extended. Let us ſet bounds to that luſt of dominion, for the ſake of trade, with which we have been infatuated during a whole century; and let dear-bought experience teach us, that our conqueſts, particularly thoſe in the Eaſt-Indies, the province of Canada in North-America, and the fortreſs of Gibraltar in Spain, have already weakened the empire; and thoſe of Canada and Gibraltar muſt, in the end, if kept, inevitably prove its ruin.

Gibraltar, that impregnable rock, is not intrinſically worth, to this nation, the powder and ball that were expended in its late gallant defence; and will be a perpetual bone of contention between Spain and Britain. It has been in our poſſeſſion above eighty years; and, including its annual expence, which amounts to half a million, and the expences incurred by the wars ſuſtained for its defence, has already coſt this nation above ſixty millions. Beſides, it has been often aſſerted, that Spain would purchaſe it at the expence of ten millions.

This, the Earl of Stair juſtly obſerves, " would be a double advantage; an expence ceaſing, and a profit ariſing; and both together would, it is preſumed, produce to the public a benefit of one million yearly."

The conqueſt of Canada coſt Great-Britain many millions, and put an end to her ſovereignty over her colonies. After the reduction of that province, the Americans had nothing to fear from a foreign enemy; and accordingly they renounced an authority, of which they never thoroughly approved. This nation has expended above one hundred and fifty millions in eſtabliſhing and defending her colonies, and in an unſucceſsful ſtruggle to retain their allegiance; and now only poſſeſſes the bleak and barren country of Nova-Scotia, and the wild and extenſive province of Canada,—that *invaluable* acquiſition, which was to ſupply our Weſt-India iſlands with every thing neceſſary for their cultivation, and the ſubſiſtence of their inhabitants; and to indemnify us, by its furs, for all the treaſure expended in our wars on that continent.

I would aſk the candid and intelligent reader, what

what advantages we preſently reap, or what are thoſe we may have in expectancy, from this bleſſed country? Will they ever be equal to its preſent peace-eſtabliſhment, which amounts to ſix hundred thouſand pounds a year; much leſs to the expences which muſt be incurred by defending it from the encroachments of its neighbours? This country, inſtead of affording our iſlands the neceſſary ſupplies, cannot ſupport its own inhabitants: Government has been obliged to open a trade with the American States, not only to ſupply the iſlands, but the province itſelf, with proviſions and other neceſſaries. The Dean of Glouceſter, ſpeaking of Canada, remarks, that, "ſince the reduction of that province, beavers, furs, and hats, are dearer than ever; and that all the woollens which have been conſumed in that country by the native inhabitants, do hardly amount to a greater quantity than thoſe very ſoldiers and ſailors would have worn and conſumed, who were loſt in the taking, defending, and garriſoning, of that province."

As neither Gibraltar nor Canada afford a revenue at all ſufficient for defraying their

peace-eſtabliſhments, but greatly increaſe the expence of the government of the empire, they ought to be given up. But ſuch ſacrifices, I acknowledge, though they might frequently be for the intereſt, are always mortifying to the pride of a nation; and what, perhaps, may have ſtill greater influence, they are always contrary to the private intereſt of the governing part of it, who would thereby be deprived of the diſpoſal of many places of truſt and profit, and of many opportunities of acquiring wealth and diſtinction, which the poſſeſſion of the moſt unprofitable province ſeldom fails to afford.

Our conqueſts and depredations in India have not only diſgraced the national character, and weakened the empire; but they are continually draining it of its people, the chief ſupport of every ſtate, in order to gratify the ambition of the Eaſt-India Company, and ſatiate the inordinate avarice of its ſervants.

Various are the opinions of politicians, with reſpect to the Company's utility to the nation. Some have aſſerted, that the trade to India, and

and the Company's territories there, will be an inexhauſtible mine of riches to this kingdom. Others have affirmed, that our territories in India, ſo far from being an inexhauſtible mine of riches, were an inſupportable burden; and that all monopolies are reſtraints and oppreſſions upon trade; and that of the Eaſt-India Company, in particular, has been not only prejudicial, but diſgraceful to the nation.

That the people of Great-Britain have laviſhed their blood and treaſure in aſſiſting the Company to acquire their vaſt territories, and have been loaded with additional annual burdens to maintain them, cannot be denied. But as our acquiſitions in India muſt be kept and maintained, on account of our trade and revenue, I ſhall lay before the reader a conciſe ſtate of the Company's dividends, the duties ariſing from their trade and territorial poſſeſſions, their debts, their revenues, and the expences of their government; and then ſubmit, to the conſideration of the public, a plan to indemnify the Company for the loſs of their property in India, upon the trade's being laid open to the community at large, which, ſooner or later, muſt inevitably happen.

From

From the following ſhort ſketch of the Company's affairs, it will appear, that the trade has not, for ſeveral years paſt, been very advantageous either to the public or to the Company, though the ſpoils of the harmleſs and defenceleſs Indians have enriched many individuals.

From the report of the Committee, in the year 1773, appointed by Parliament, on India affairs, it appears, that the Company, from the year 1708 to 1756, for the ſpace of forty-ſeven years and a half, divided the ſum of 12,000,000l. or above 280,000l. per annum, which, on a capital of 3,190,000l. amounted to above eight and a half per cent.: And that, at the laſt-mentioned period, it likewiſe appears, that, beſides the above dividend, the capital ſtock of the Company had been increaſed 180,000l.; and that the duties ariſing from their imports were augmented to 700,000l.

Since the yeat 1756, wherein Surajah Dowlah, Nabob of Bengal, was depoſed and murdered, which was the origin of the Company's power, and of all their ſubſequent evils in India, their principal object has been conqueſt, and

not

not trade. In the courſe of that year, the Company ſubdued the kingdom of Bengal, and acquired the revenues of a rich and extenſive territory, amounting, as it was then ſaid, to more than three millions. Since that period, their dividends have fluctuated greatly; ſometimes they have been as high as twelve and a half per cent; at other times, owing to their wars, and the rapacity of their ſervants, they have fallen to ſix per cent.; but upon an average their dividends have not exceeded eight per cent., and, for ſome time paſt, have chiefly ariſen from their territorial revenues, and not from their trade.

In the year 1767, the Company being in poſſeſſion of a vaſt revenue, and having raiſed their dividend to ten per cent., the Government judged it expedient that the nation ſhould profit by their immenſe wealth. The Miniſtry accordingly claimed their territorial acquiſitions as of right belonging to the Crown. In ſupport of this claim they mentioned, "That ſuch territorial poſſeſſions, as the ſubjects of any State ſhall acquire by conqueſt, are virtually the property of the State, and not of thoſe individuals who acquire them." The Company, in lieu of this claim,

claim, agreed to pay 400,000l. annually to Government.

Notwithſtanding the Company's debts at this time exceeded ſix millions, they attempted to raiſe their dividend to twelve and a half per cent.; but they were reſtrained from any farther increaſe of dividend by act of Parliament, of which the object was to enable them to make a ſpeedier progreſs in the payment of their debt.

In the year 1768, by an account laid before the directors, the Company's net revenue, clear of all deductions and military charges, was ſtated at two millions forty-eight thouſand ſeven hundred and forty-ſeven pounds. They were ſaid at the ſame time to poſſeſs another revenue, chiefly ariſing from the cuſtoms eſtabliſhed at their different ſettlements, amounting to four hundred and forty thouſand pounds. So great a revenue might certainly have afforded a very large dividend, beſides the 400,000l. paid annually to Government; and at the ſame time have left a large ſinking fund ſufficient for the ſpeedy reduction of their debts. However, in the year 1773, their debts, inſtead of being reduced, were vaſtly increaſed; and their affairs,

owing

owing to the rapacity of their ſervants, were in great diſorder. An empty treaſury at home; the immenſe amount of bills from Bengal; with debt to the Government, to the bank, and other public offices, almoſt produced bankruptcy, and obliged them to petition Parliament for a loan of 1,500,000l. During the inveſtigation and ſtatement of their accounts, which this application neceſſarily produced, it appeared, that affairs in India were in a very confuſed ſituation, owing to the mal-practices of the Company's ſervants; and that the Company was, of itſelf, inſufficient for the government of ſuch extenſive poſſeſſions; and that the neceſſity of giving up the management to Government was very apparent.

An act was accordingly paſſed for eſtabliſhing certain regulations for the better management of the affairs of the Eaſt India Company, as well in India as in Europe. By this bill it was enacted, that the Court of Directors ſhould in future be elected for four years, ſix members annually, but none to hold their ſeats longer than four years. That no perſon ſhould vote at the election of the Directors, who had

not poſſeſſed their ſtock twelve months. That the ſtock of qualification, inſtead of 500l. as it had formerly been, ſhould now be 1000l. That the Mayor's Court of Calcutta ſhould for the future be confined to ſmall mercantile cauſes, to which only its juriſdiction could extend before the territorial acquiſitions. That inſtead of this court a new one ſhould be eſtabliſhed, conſiſting of a Chief Juſtice and three puiſne Judges; and that theſe Judges ſhould be appointed by the Crown. That a ſuperiority ſhould be given to the preſidency of Bengal over the other preſidencies in India. That the right of nominating the Governor and Council of Bengal ſhould be veſted in the Crown, &c. &c. This bill, by which the power and influence of the Miniſtry were greatly increaſed, was ſtrenuouſly oppoſed by the Antiminiſterialiſts; and a proteſt was entered againſt it, ſigned by thirteen Lords. Some curious facts* appeared from the examination of the Company's ſervants before the Houſe of Commons at that time; the principal of which was, that from the year 1765 to 1773, the Company's

* Facts which perhaps may, in ſome meaſure, account for the Company's ſo long poſſeſſing the excluſive privilege of trading to India.

pany's expences had increaſed from 700,000l. to 1,700,000l. per annum; and that Government had received near two millions annually from the Company, and in extraordinaries had immenſe profits, while the proprietors loſt conſiderably of the dividend, which the profits of their trade only could have afforded.

This regulating bill did not put an end to the diſorders of the Company's government in India. Notwithſtanding that, during a momentary fit of good conduct, they had at one time collected, into the treaſury of Calcutta, more than three millions ſterling; and had afterwards extended, either their dominions, or their depredations, over a vaſt acceſſion of ſome of the richeſt and moſt fertile countries in India; all was waſted and deſtroyed; and they found themſelves altogether unprepared to ſtop the incurſions of Hyder Alli. In conſequence of thoſe diſorders, the Company were in greater diſtreſs than ever; and, in order to prevent immediate bankruptcy, were, in the year 1783, once more reduced to ſupplicate the aſſiſtance of Government. At that time the Company owed 11,200,000l. and they had ſtock in hand only

to the amount of about 3,000,000l. which when deducted, there remained a debt of eight millions. The cuſtoms ariſing from their imports had increaſed from 700,000l. to 900,000l. per annum, which ſum, when added to the 400,000l. paid for their territorial poſſeſſions, had increaſed their duties paid to the public revenue to 1,300,000l. a-year.

The reader will obſerve that, at the laſt mentioned period, the Company were owing 700,000l. for cuſtoms; and they had bills upon them amounting nearly to three millions more. With reſpect to a great part of theſe, the Company begged the aſſiſtance of Parliament to enable them to put off the payment for three years. Thus the national credit was pledged not only for theſe ſums, but muſt be pledged for any ſums borrowed by them with the conſent of Parliament; and if the cuſtoms from the Company's trade are not paid, the fund aſſigned to the public creditor muſt prove deficient in the proportion of the Company's failure; and this deficiency muſt be made good by taxes on the people of Great-Britain.

From the ſtate of the Company's affairs given into

into Parliament by Mr Dundas, in the year 1786, it appeared, that the Company's debts ſtood at eight millions; but he acknowledged that it would require ſix millions to ſet Lord Cornwallis's government upon its legs. From this eſtimate it is evident, that the Company's debts at preſent muſt be about fourteen millions. It likewiſe appeared, that the groſs amount of their territorial revenues, including the ſum of 345,000l. ariſing from the cuſtoms eſtabliſhed at their different ſettlements, was 7,499,729l. and that the civil and military peace eſtabliſhments, and all other charges on this revenue, amounted to the enormous ſum of 5,623,209l. Deducting this ſum from the groſs revenue, there remains of net annual revenue 1,876,520l. which laſt ſum was to be appropriated towards liquidating the debt, and for inveſtments.

From this ſtate of the Company's affairs, it appears very evident, that, before the acquiſition of the rich kingdom of Bengal, they carried on a ſucceſsful trade, and, from their profits, made annually a very conſiderable dividend to their proprietors; that they increaſed their capital 180,000l. and augmented their cuſtoms to 700,000l. a year.

But

But when conqueſt, and not trade, became the Company's ſole object, when avarice impelled them to war for the ſake of plunder, inſtead of increaſing their capital from the profits of their trade, they increaſed not only the national debt, but contracted a large debt; and as they extended their conqueſts and depredations over the richeſt provinces of India, and increaſed their revenue, they augmented their debts and the expences of their government, and almoſt reduced themſelves to a ſtate of bankruptcy; ſo that, for ſeveral years paſt, they have been obliged to carry on their commerce with the revenues ariſing from their territorial poſſeſſions, the ſpoils of the Indians.

"Before the acquiſition of Bengal," ſaid a great Stateſman, "the Proprietors purchaſed their ſtock as a means of their ſubſiſtence; but ſince that period, things are totally reverſed: The vote is not to protect the ſtock, but the ſtock is bought to acquire the vote; and the end of the vote is to cover and ſupport, againſt juſtice, ſome man of power, who has made an obnoxious fortune in India; or to maintain in power thoſe who are actually employing it in the

the acquiſition of ſuch a fortune, and to avail themſelves in return of his patronage."

Dr Adam Smith, in his celebrated Inquiry into the Nature and Cauſes of the Wealth of Nations, ſays, "Frequently a man of great, ſometimes even a man of ſmall fortune, is willing to purchaſe a thouſand pounds ſhare in India ſtock, merely for the influence which he expects to acquire by a vote in the Court of Proprietors. It gives him a ſhare, though not in the plunder, yet in the appointment of the plunderers of India: The Court of Directors, though they make the appointment, being neceſſarily more or leſs under the influence of the Proprietors, who not only elect thoſe Directors, but ſometimes over-rule the appointments of their ſervants in India; and, provided he can enjoy this influence for a few years, and thereby provide for a certain number of his friends, he frequently cares little about the dividend, or even about the value of the ſtock upon which his vote is founded. About the proſperity of the great empire, in the government of which that vote gives him a ſhare, he ſeldom cares at all."

But

But this is not all. By the monopoly granted to the Eaſt-India Company, all the other ſubjects of the ſtate are taxed very abſurdly in two different ways: Firſt, by the high price of goods, which, in the caſe of a fair trade, they could buy much cheaper; and ſecondly, by their total excluſion from a branch of buſineſs, which it might be both convenient and profitable for many of them to carry on. It is for the moſt worthleſs of all purpoſes too, that they are taxed in this manner: It is merely to enable the Company to ſupport the negligence, profuſion, and malverſation of their own ſervants, whoſe diſorderly conduct ſeldom allows the dividend of the Company to exceed the ordinary rate of profit in trades which are altogether free, and very frequently makes it fall even a good deal ſhort of that rate.

The intelligent reader knows, that the commerce of India has been courted by all the trading nations in the world, from the earlieſt ages to the preſent time; and has been the ſource of wealth and power to every nation poſſeſſed of it. But it is a truth, founded upon the unanimous teſtimony of hiſtorians, that all

thoſe empires, kingdoms, and ſtates, except the Roman, both ancient and modern, which were poſſeſſed of the India trade, roſe to power and opulence entirely by exporting the rich commodities of that country to diſtant nations.

Monteſquieu, ſpeaking of the commerce of the Romans to the Indies, ſays, "It will admit of a queſtion, whether the trade to India was of any advantage to the Romans? They were obliged to export their bullion thither; though they had not, like us, the reſource of America, which ſupplies what we ſend away. I am perſuaded, that one of the reaſons of their increaſing the value of their ſpecie, by eſtabliſhing baſe coin, was the ſcarcity of ſilver, owing to the continual exportation of it to the Indies; and though the commodities of this country were ſold at Rome at the rate of *cent. per cent.* this profit of the Romans, being obtained from the Romans themſelves, could not enrich the empire.

"It may be alledged, on the other hand, that this commerce increaſed the Roman navigation, and of courſe their power; that new merchandizes augmented their inland trade,

gave encouragement to the arts, and employment to the induſtrious; that the number of ſubjects multiplied in proportion to the new means of ſupport; that this new commerce was productive of luxury, which I have proved to be as favourable to a Monarchical Government, as fatal to a Commonwealth; that this eſtabliſhment was of the ſame date as the fall of their Republic; that the luxury of Rome was become neceſſary; and that it was extremely proper, that a city, which had accumulated all the wealth of the univerſe, ſhould refund it by its luxury."

Thus Monteſquieu was of opinion, that the trade of the Romans to India, notwithſtanding their ſcarcity of ſpecie, and their conſumption of its productions, was of conſiderable advantage to the empire; as it tended to promote luxury, and increaſe its navigation, and conſequently its power.

But the reader has been told, that the Romans were never diſtinguiſhed by a zeal for trade. Their genius, their military education, and the very form of their Government, eſtranged them from commerce and manufactures.

tures. They extended their empire entirely to gratify their ambition, and to acquire the tribute and the plunder of the conquered provinces.

Britain, on the contrary, has riſen to power and opulence, ſolely by her induſtry, her manufactures, and commerce. Hence it muſt be evident, that, in order to enrich our empire, its manufactures and its commerce ought to be encouraged and increaſed; and that of courſe the trade to India ſhould be laid open to the public; and that its valuable productions, imported into this country, at leaſt a conſiderable part of them, ought to be re-exported to foreign nations. "The trade to the Eaſt-Indies," ſays Dr Smith, "by opening a market to the commodities of Europe, or what comes nearly to the ſame thing, to the gold and ſilver which is purchaſed with theſe commodities, muſt neceſſarily tend to increaſe the annual production of European commodities, and conſequently the real wealth and revenue of Europe. That it has hitherto increaſed them ſo little, is probably owing to the reſtraints which it every-where labours under."

All monopolies have been juſtly conſidered as reſtraints and oppreſſions upon trade; and that of the Eaſt-India Company has been deemed by many not only prejudicial, but diſgraceful to the nation. Though the eſtabliſhment of this Company was vindicated, in the cleareſt manner, by that intelligent writer, Sir Joſiah Child; yet he acknowledges, "That all thoſe trading Companies, however neceſſary in the infancy of trade, have increaſed leſs than thoſe where every member of the ſtate had liberty to trade." Every monopoly, therefore, ought to be ſuppreſſed, and the trade laid open to the community at large. Fortunately for this kingdom, the greater part of theſe excluſive Companies, which formerly confined trade, are now aboliſhed; and commerce has increaſed by the increaſe of liberty. An open trade to India would, without all doubt, extend our navigation, increaſe the public revenue, and improve our manufactures and agriculture, the genuine ſources of national wealth.

It may be ſaid, that Government, by ſuppreſſing the Eaſt-India Company, and paying an adequate value for their territorial revenues, together

together with their fortifications and buildings, would lay an additional load of debt upon the nation, inſtead of diſcharging a part of that which is already contracted. But, in anſwer to this, let it be obſerved, that the net ſurplus of the revenues in India, and the profits ariſing from the ſale of Gibraltar and the ceſſion of Canada, (for it is not probable, that a purchaſer could be found for that invaluable acquiſition) would in a few years indemnify the Company, and anſwer all the juſt claims they might have upon Government, and afterwards add two millions to the ſinking fund annually.

Mr Dundas eſtimates the annual groſs revenues of India at 7,499,729l. and ſtates the net ſurplus, after defraying all charges, at 1,876,520l. But I ſhall allow 876,520l. annually for contin-

If this firſt eſſay meet the approbation of the public, I ſhall devote my time and ſtudy to a work of greater extent; wherein I ſhall trace the riſe and progreſs, together with the revolutions in, and the effects of, the Indian commerce among the ancients, as well as among the moderns. To which I ſhall add, a conciſe account of the principal tranſactions of the Eaſt-India Company, from the year 1746 to the year 1783.

gencies,

gencies, this will reduce the net annual ſurplus to - - - - £. 1,000,000

I ſhall only ſtate the price of Gibral. at 5,000,000

and the annual civil and military eſtabliſhments of that fortreſs and Canada at one million only } 1,000,000

7,000,000

Thus after all the Company's claims are diſcharged, the net annual ſurplus of our revenues in India, together with the amount of the peace eſtabliſhments of Gibraltar and Canada, would ſtill remain to be added annually either to the ſinking fund, or to the public revenue.

But though Government ſhould think proper to renew the Eaſt-India Company's charter, nevertheleſs only by the ſale of Gibraltar, and ceſſion of Canada, the public revenue would not only be increaſed a million annually, but the intereſt alone of the five millions, the price of Gibraltar, applied to the augmentation of the ſeamen's wages, would effectually put a ſtop to that abominable practice of impreſſing men for the Royal navy: a practice repugnant to juſtice, to liberty, and to every principle of the Britiſh Conſtitution. This

This plan will perhaps be conſidered by many as chimerical—it may be ſo; but if they reflect on the inſtability of all human affairs, particularly the late inglorious ceſſion of our thirteen provinces in America, and the fate of the French* and Dutch Eaſt-India Companies, they may be apprehenſive, that before the middle of the next century we ſhall be obliged to ſuppreſs our India Company, and cede both Canada and Gibraltar, after we have added another hundred millions to the national debt. The intelligent reader needs not be told, that this ruinous monopoly, the barren rock of Gibraltar, and the wild province of Canada, have already coſt the people of Great-Britain above one hundred millions.

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* The National Aſſembly of France have aboliſhed their Eaſt-India Company, and very prudently laid that branch of trade open to the public at large. Baron Rieſbeck, who wrote lately, foretold the fate of the Dutch Eaſt-India Company, when he ſaid, "that the Dutch India Company, whoſe adminiſtration was ſtill more miſerable than that of the Engliſh; and which, incredible as it is, is loaded with debt by the robbery of its ſervants, and the intereſtedneſs of the proprietors, muſt be entirely ſuppreſſed, and its poſſeſſions governed by the republic. This Company is to be ſuperintended, for the future, by a Board of Controul, compoſed of the ableſt men in the republic.

The ſituation of Britain, the genius of her people, and the ſyſtem of her Government, fit her for trade and commerce. By induſtry, trade, and agriculture, we became a rich and powerful nation, and by their decay we muſt grow poor and impotent. As commerce and manufactures enrich, ſo they fortify our country. The ſea is our barrier, ſhips are our fortreſſes, and the mariners, that trade and commerce only can furniſh, are the garriſons to defend them.

Xenophon obſerves "That if the Athenians, together with the ſovereignty of the ſeas, had enjoyed the advantageous ſituation of an iſland, they might with great eaſe have given law to their neighbours. For the ſame fleets which enabled them to ravage the ſea coaſt of the Continent at diſcretion, would equally have protected their own country from the inſults of their enemies, as long as they maintained their naval ſuperiority." "One would imagine, ſays Monteſquieu, that Xenophon in this paſſage was ſpeaking of the iſland of Britain."—Undoubtedly we are maſters of both thoſe natural and acquired advantages, which Xenophon required to make

his

his countrymen invincible. We daily feel their importance more and more, and muſt be ſenſible that our liberty, our happineſs, and our very exiſtence as a people, depend upon our naval ſuperiority, ſupported by our military virtue and public ſpirit.

"Whilſt nations on the Continent, ſays Bolingbroke, are at immenſe charge in maintaining their barriers, and perpetually on their guard, and frequently embroiled to extend or ſtrengthen them, Great-Britain may, if her governors pleaſe, accumulate wealth in maintaining hers; make herſelf ſecure from invaſions, and be ready to invade others when her own immediate intereſt or the general intereſt of Europe requires it. Of all which Queen Elizabeth's reign is a memorable, and an undeniable proof. I ſaid the general intereſt of Europe, becauſe it ſeems to me that this alone ſhould call our councils off from an almoſt entire application to their domeſtic and proper buſineſs. Other nations muſt watch over every motion of their neighbours; penetrate, if they can, every deſign; foreſee every minute event, and take part by ſome engagement or other in almoſt every con-

juncture that ariſes. But as we cannot be eaſily nor ſuddenly attacked, and as we ought not to aim at any acquiſition of territory on the Continent, it may be our intereſt to watch the ſecret workings of the ſeveral councils abroad; to adviſe, and warn; to abet, and oppoſe; but it never can be our true intereſt eaſily and officiouſly to enter into action, much leſs into engagements that imply action and expence. Other nations, like the *velites*, or light-armed troops, ſtand foremoſt in the field, and ſkirmiſh perpetually. When a great war begins, we ought to look on the powers of the Continent, to whom we incline, like the two firſt lines, the *principes* and *hæſtati* of a Roman army; and on ourſelves, like the *triarii*, that are not to charge with theſe legions on every occaſion, but to be ready for the conflict whenever the fortune of the day, be it ſooner or later, calls us to it, and the ſum of things, or the general intereſt, makes it neceſſary.

This is that poſt of advantage and honour, which our ſingular ſituation among the powers of Europe determines us, or ſhould determine us, to take, in all diſputes that happen on the Con-

Continent. If we neglect it, and diſſipate our ſtrength on occaſions that touch us remotely or indirectly; we are governed by men who do not know the true intereſt of this iſland, or who have ſome other intereſt more at heart. If we adhere to it, ſo at leaſt as to deviate little and ſeldom from it, as we ſhall do whenever we are wiſely and honeſtly governed, then will this nation make her proper figure, and a great one it will be. By a continual attention to improve her natural, that is her maritime ſtrength, by collecting all her forces within herſelf, and reſerving them to be laid out on great occaſions, ſuch as regard her immediate intereſts and her honour, or ſuch as are truly important to the general ſyſtem of power in Europe; ſhe may be the arbitrator of differences, the guardian of liberty, and the preſerver of that balance, which has been ſo much talked of, and is ſo little underſtood.".

Had Great-Britain ſtrictly adhered to ſo prudent a conduct with regard to the Continent of Europe, ſhe muſt have been at this day one of the moſt powerful, opulent, and happy nations that ever flouriſhed; and, as arbitreſs of all Eu-

rope, would ſurely have acted a much more important part than ever ſhe performed on the Continent of Europe.

But inſtead of purſuing ſo prudent and ſalutary a conduct, this nation hath adopted the pernicious abſurdity of waſting its blood and treaſure, exhauſting its reſources, incurring an enormous debt big with bankruptcy and ruin; in a word, in expending above one hundred and fifty millions in fruitleſs efforts to maintain that chimera, the balance of power, or rather to ſupport the intereſts of poor, mercenary, imperious, and ungrateful allies*.

Having thus taken the liberty of making ſome remarks on our expenſive European Continental wars; and our diſtant, ideal, and pernicious conqueſts; I ſhall proceed to ſhew the power which the Crown acquires by the auxiliaries of the Septennial Bill.

The firſt, and the moſt powerful of that bill's auxiliaries, which I ſhall mention, is the unequal repreſentation of the people in Parliament.

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* In the courſe of the four continental wars of 1688, 1702, 1742, and 1756, the nation, according to Dr Smith, hath expended above two hundred millions.

The partial ſtate of our repreſentation is chiefly owing to the decayed boroughs, which, on account of their poverty, their corruption, and venality, are juſtly ſtigmatized with the appellation of—*the rotten part of the Conſtitution.* The decreaſe of trade hath almoſt depopulated many of our ancient and once opulent boroughs, and reduced the number of the electors, which is one of the greateſt misfortunes that can befall our State; and this, together with their poverty, renders them an eaſy prey to the dependents on a Court, and the creatures of a Miniſter.

In the courſe of the debates in the National Aſſembly of France, with regard to the new plan for the diviſion of that kingdom, and the organization of the Provincial Aſſemblies, the defects of the Engliſh Conſtitution were frequently and juſtly adverted to.—Such as the repreſentation of the kingdom in Parliament, which left almoſt whole provinces without a repreſentation, while a few villages, containing not a dozen electors, ſent deputies to the Commons. "The Engliſh," ſaid the French politicians, "would have avoided this radical defect, if they

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had ſuffered the baſis of repreſentation to have been founded on population, and the contributions which each individual paid to the State."

It is certain, that the baſis of our repreſentation was founded on pupulation and contribution, though it be now greatly altered by time and the fluctuation of trade.

When the ſyſtem of our repreſentation was firſt eſtabliſhed, agriculture, trade, and manufactures, were in their infancy. The weſtern parts of England, and particularly the county of Cornwall *, were, on account of the valuable productions of their mines, the moſt rich, flouriſhing, and populous parts of the kingdom. Theſe advantages enabled them to pay large contributions to the ſtate, and juſtly entitled them to that ſhare in the legiſlation which they now poſſeſs.

But as agriculture, manufactures, and trade, extended themſelves throughout the kingdom, many of the ancient boroughs gradually fell to decay, and not only loſt the greater part of

* The Phœnicians traded to Cornwall for tin, ſome ages before the commencement of the Chriſtian æra. Its tin mines are at this day the richeſt in Europe; and the number of the miners are ſaid to be 100,000.

their

their trade, but their ſuperiority in numbers, and conſequently their political importance. This decreaſe of trade and population in many of the boroughs, and increaſe of wealth and population in many large unrepreſented towns, have rendered our repreſentation very different from the original plan of our Government.—This unequal repreſentation of the people in the Britiſh Senate was very juſtly reprobated by the French, and deſerves the moſt ſerious conſideration of every Engliſhman, who values the liberties of his country; and calls aloud for a ſpeedy and effectual reform.

In order to ſhew the neceſſity of a reform in the repreſentation of the people in Parliament, I ſhall lay before the reader ſome extracts from the ſpeeches of ſeveral members of the firſt abilities, delivered in the Houſe of Commons upon this important ſubject; and endeavour to ſet in a clear light the preſent abſurd and unequal ſtate of the repreſentation; and offer a plan for a reform.

In the year 1783, at the cloſe of an expenſive and inglorious war, which had been abet-

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ted by the power and influence of an Adminiſtration chiefly operating upon the Members of the rotten boroughs, Mr William Pitt offered, to the attention of the Commons, his ſcheme for a reform in the repreſentation of the people—" a reform, which he ſtated to be the only ſtay, the only ſalvation of his country." After having ~~taken~~ taking, with great judgment and preciſion, a ſpeculative retroſpect of the progreſſive ſyſtem of the Conſtitution, he aſſerted, " that the nation ſaw the neceſſity of a reform—The nation cried aloud for ſome meaſure that would effectually interfere with the purpoſes of corruption; and the decline of our political ſituation more ſtrongly enforced the neceſſity of ſuch a procedure—All parts of the kingdom reiterated their demands for an eſtabliſhment of the repreſentation upon ſuch a footing.—The petitions which the Houſe was in poſſeſſion of, authenticated his aſſertions; and with ſuch authorities, he felt himſelf well warranted in being forward in the attempt to ſecure to his country that purity in its Conſtitution which our anceſtors had ſtruggled ſo hard to provide, and which the wiſdom of their proviſions,

viſions, notwithſtanding the unavoidable corruption of ſucceeding ages had impaired them, had been ſo prudently calculated to ſecure. He ventured to aſſert, what he ſhould have to propoſe could not be objected to. At the ſame time, that though it was on the great principles of it he would deſire to build the bill he hoped to be able to get through the Houſe; yet he could wiſh it to be underſtood, that a more equal repreſentation, by a general, not a partial qualification of electors, was a great object of what he had in view.

" It was impoſſible," he ſaid, " conſtituted as the Commons' Houſe of Parliament was on the preſent day, that the buſineſs of the State could be conducted by that branch of the legiſlation, with an eye to the real intereſt and concerns of the people. Private emolument and ſelfiſh conſideration operated as more powerful inducements to ſtimulate perſons to obtain the guardianſhip of the delegated rights of the people; and that Houſe, which ought to have no other purpoſe in view than a watchful attention to the public good, was ſo far perverted from its original conſtitution, and its

rational and implied inſtitution, that party views, and principles of faction, and private aggrandizement, ſeemed to be then its more material objects.

" It was evident," he ſaid, " what peculiar part of the kingdom, and particular deſcriptions of perſons and places, it was, that gave to the people at large, a juſt right to complain that ſomething was wanting from the legiſlature, to ſecure to them the ends for which a Houſe of Commons was founded—a ſhameful abuſe of the rights of election—a more ſhameful abuſe of the truſt of delegation had brought this unhappy country to the very verge of ruin and political annihilation.—As his views, however, laſt year, when he aimed at an abolition*, or at leaſt a modification, of the elective privileges of boroughs—that rotten part of the Conſtitution, had not been generally approved, he would conſent to leave them ſtill in ex-

* His ſcheme was to aboliſh thirty-ſix of the leaſt populous and important boroughs, which would transfer ſeventy-two parliamentary Repreſentatives to the counties and towns of greater conſequence.—A meaſure, in my opinion, better calculated to ſecure the independence of Parliament than the above ſcheme.

iſtence;

iſtence; but his view was to rear a power that would be tantamount to prevent their baneful influence; and if that baneful influence was not timely checked, or provided againſt, as it had already brought us within the graſp of deſtruction, ſo would it at length devote us to its devouring jaws.

"As the county Members were more immediately ſuppoſed to have in view the intereſts of the State, and leſs of private gratification; and as they were looked to as the only pure and uninfluenced part of the repreſentation: But as their political influence was inferior to that of the boroughs, he would propoſe an addition to their members, to ſuch an amount, as, he truſted, would effectually balance that fatal weight which the boroughs had, from a peculiarity and variety of circumſtances, ſo unhappily acquired." After enforcing, by a variety of arguments, the great and inevitable conſequences that the adoption of ſuch a meaſure would induce, he ſtated the reſolutions which he intended to move, and which were,—

1ſt. "That it was the opinion of the Houſe, that meaſures were highly neceſſary to be taken

for the future prevention of bribery and expence at elections.

2d. " That for the future, when the majority of voters for any borough, who ſhall be convicted of groſs and notorious corruption before a ſelect Committee of that Houſe appointed to try the merits of any election, ſuch borough ſhould be disfranchiſed; and the minority of voters, not ſo convicted, ſhould be entitled to vote for the county in which ſuch borough ſhall be ſituated.

3d. " That an addition of a hundred Knights of the Shire, and of repreſentatives of the metropolis, ſhould be added to the ſtate of the repreſentation."

The motion was ſupported by all the diſintereſted and independent county Members, and by thoſe borough Repreſentatives who were ſincerely attached to the Conſtitution of their country. It was oppoſed by Lord North, and by many of the adherents of that Right Honourable Member, whoſe adminiſtration had occaſioned the motion, and by almoſt all the borough Members. But I cannot here omit paying that tribute of praiſe to Mr Thomas Pitt,

Pitt, which he juſtly merits, for his perſonal diſintereſtedneſs in offering to ſacrifice the borough of Old Sarum to the public good; "which was," he ſaid, "a victim ſufficient to evince his ſincerity."

But as this is a ſubject of ſo great importance to the community, I ſhall give the reader the principal arguments adduced by thoſe who ſpoke in the debate; particularly thoſe of Mr Fox and Mr Beaufoy, which the candid and unprejudiced reader muſt applaud.

Mr Powis ſaid, "that a reform in Parliament was a tender and delicate topic for diſcuſſion, and ſhould not be meddled with but by the greateſt care and circumſpection. He ſaw no dangerous ſyſtem at preſent adopted by Parliament, that could in any degree ſupport the hypotheſis of the Right Hon. Gentleman. The Right Hon. Gentleman had very properly called the Conſtitution a glorious fabric of human ingenuity. He could not with juſtice beſtow the ſame praiſe on this wild, unconnected ſyſtem. The Right Hon. Gentleman had ſaid it was bringing back the Conſtitution to its original purity, and re-eſtabliſhing it on the ſame glorious

glorious principles for which our anceſtors fought and ſhed their deareſt blood; but he denied that it was a reſtoration, but an innovation, improvement, or melioration, if he might be allowed the expreſſion, that was intended. He diſapproved of all dangerous experiments, all chimerical innovations, and wiſhed for no Utopian Government, no mad conjectural plans of reformation, in order to pleaſe ſome of the diſcontented people of the kingdom. He had no idea of liſtening to the prayers of ſuch people, and had no intention of giving ſuch unlimited powers at elections to a parcel of coblers and the dregs of the people."

Lord North ſaid, "he had liſtened with the greateſt attention to the Hon. Member who had made the motion, and his attention had been rewarded; but the principal impreſſion that had been made in his mind, was, that it was with a wiſe and prudent view that innovations in the Conſtitution ſhould be attempted; acting therefore under this ſalutary impreſſion, he would not run haſtily into an innovation, but would lay it down as a maxim, that proofs ought firſt to be exhibited of the exiſtence of the evil complained

plained of; he denied the exiſtence of the evil; and he was himſelf a proof of the arguments which he ſhould adduce to ſhew, that the influence of the boroughs was not ſuch as had been deſcribed.—The American war, which had been laid to his door, had often been called the war of the crown; but it was very unjuſtly called ſo; for it was undertaken for the expreſs purpoſes of maintaining the juſt rights of Parliament, or in other words of the people of Great-Britain, over the dependencies of the Empire; for this reaſon it was popular at its commencement, and eagerly embraced by the people and Parliament: could the influence of the Crown have procured ſuch great majorities within the doors of that Houſe, as went almoſt to produce unanimity? Or if the influence would have produced theſe majorities within doors, could it have produced the almoſt unanimous approbation beſtowed without doors, which rendered the war the moſt popular of any that had been carried on for many years?

"It was well known that he (Lord North) had never been connected with any party; it was in Parliament he was firſt known; there he was found

found by thoſe who raiſed him; by Parliament he was ſupported, and by Parliament he was pulled down; while ſucceſs attended our armies in the outſet of the American war, he met the ſtrongeſt ſupport; when theſe ſucceſſes were ſucceeded by calamities, his ſupport gradually fell off, and the war became unpopular; and its unpopularity ſoon effected the downfall of his adminiſtration. The Houſe having once taken a diſlike to the war, ſoon got rid of it, by that famous reſolution, which put a padlock upon the ſword of Great-Britain. Where was then the influence of the Crown? Why did it not avert this blow? Why did it not keep a Miniſter in office, in ſpite of the voice of Parliament? It was impoſſible for ſuch an influence to interfere, for it did not exiſt: While he enjoyed the confidence of Parliament, he continued in office, when he loſt that confidence, he was obliged to ceaſe to be a Miniſter; the breath of Parliament made him; the breath of Parliament unmade him; who then would venture to enter on proofs of the exiſtence of ſuch an influence as had been complained of? He himſelf exhibited in his own perſon a refutation of a milli-

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on of ſuch proofs as he had heard advanced; for he was at once the proof and the victim of the power of Parliament. Rejecting, therefore, as he did, the idea that ſuch an evil exiſted as was complained of, it was no wonder that he oppoſed any innovation founded on a chimerical apprehenſion. He thought that the Conſtitution required there ſhould be ſome influence in that Houſe, to temper the heat, and counteract the tendency of that body to a pure democracy. If this Conſtitution ought to be preſerved, there ſhould be a ſufficient influence to prevent the Crown from being completely ſhackled, and made a captive; the abolition of Monarchy itſelf might be the conſequence of the non-exiſtence of ſome influence ſomewhere; but no influence could make that Houſe act wrong, though it might prevent it from doing wrong. But ſuppoſing the influence exiſted, how did Gentlemen wiſh to remedy the evil? Did they agree? By no means; one aſked for an "hundred Knights;" another ſaid, "Why not fifty?" His anſwer would be, "No, not one."

Sir Watkin Lewes ſaid, "he ſeldom troubled the Houſe with his ſentiments, but this was a

queſtion of ſo great importance and magnitude, in which his conſtituents and the public felt themſelves ſo much intereſted, that he ſhould ill diſcharge his duty to them, if he contented himſelf with giving his ſilent vote. Obliged as he held himſelf to the Right Hon. Gentleman for bringing forward thoſe propoſitions, yet he was forced to declare they did not go to the extent of his wiſhes, or of thoſe of his conſtituents, and he believed of the public; but as they tended in ſome meaſure to ſecure the independence of Parliament, and would give ſome ſatisfaction to the kingdom, they ſhould have his moſt earneſt ſupport."

Mr Byng lamented the want of reformation, and ſaid "That he brought a petition from the Tower Hamlets, complaining of the want of repreſentation in Parliament, though they paid more taxes by ſeveral thouſand pounds, than the county of Cornwall, which ſends forty-four members to Parliament. The freeholders of London laboured alſo under great grievances, for they had not a ſingle vote in the return of members, though men of great opulence and conſequence. Nay, in a variety of parts of the

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town, the people on one ſide the ſtreet had votes, while their oppoſite neighbours had no ſuch privilege. He particularized Oxford road and other places."

Mr Beaufoy ſupported the motion with ſpirit and ability; and was extremely ſevere on the men and meaſures which induced the neceſſity of it. "He thought that every unprejudiced mind muſt be convinced that there was certainly an undue influence in the Miniſter. Were not ſeveral bills, admirably calculated to diminiſh the influence of the Crown, at that time ſo much complained of, rejected almoſt unanimouſly during the noble Lord in the blue Ribbon's adminiſtration? and were they not as unanimouſly agreed upon under the adminiſtration of his ſucceſſor? Could this be called any thing elſe than undue influence in the Miniſter? Or could any one aſſert, that an uncorrupted Houſe of Commons would ſo quickly give up ſentiments they had ſo long profeſſed, to adopt thoſe of a man, for no other reaſon but becauſe he was the Miniſter of the day? Let thoſe who could apologize for ſuch conduct.

Theſe, he ſaid, were inſtances ſufficient to prove, that the moment any perſon was appointed to the head of the Treaſury Board, that moment he acquires an amazing influence in both Houſes of Parliament, an influence the wiſdom of our anceſtors never intended him to poſſeſs. But then it might be aſked, if the Miniſter poſſeſs this influence, does it deſtroy that equilibrium of our Conſtitution, which ought to be ſupported, by giving a power to one of the three branches over the other two? That it deſtroys the equilibrium was certain, and has been the means of defeating many of the advantages our Conſtitution was calculated to afford. The recent diſmemberment of the Britiſh Empire, the decreaſe of our commerce, the increaſe of our debt, the loſs of our fellow-ſubjects, the emigration now ſo much to be apprehended, were ſufficient to prove that we can have no reaſonable hope to derive in future that full enjoyment of thoſe advantages of our Conſtitution ſo much impaired, as we had a right to expect from it in its more perfect ſtate. However we might wiſh theſe circumſtances to be buried in oblivion, yet the hiſtoric page would unfold them to the

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eye of poſterity, and with them fix the æra when Britiſh glory ſuffered that eclipſe which muſt ever be lamented, and likewiſe a ſtigma upon the names of thoſe men by whoſe means it had been obſcured. We had already experienced many evils from influence and corruption, and it was now become our duty to try by every poſſible means ~~human efforts could find out~~, to avert thoſe evils which may be in ſtore for us. This," he ſaid, " was not a time for us to rely upon purity of inclination; opportunity was never wanting when power was at hand: Let us then, by a well-timed vigorous effort, endeavour to reſtore to us thoſe advantages of our Conſtitution, which our forefathers enjoyed in its original ſtate of purity: Let us recollect, that it is not the influence of a favourite, or the councils of a Prince, that is now to be ſuppreſſed; for theſe could be prevented by the purity of Parliament. The thirſt of arbitrary rule might deſign to enſlave a free nation; but a virtuous Houſe of Commons would ſoon detect their purpoſes, however carefully diſguiſed; and, by its conſtitutional perſeverance, entirely defeat all their projects.

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" The influence of a Miniſter, in the great councils of a nation, was what we were now to oppoſe: It is an influence of the moſt dangerous conſequence; the object of it was the corruption of the guardians of our liberty. This was the many-headed monſter now to be cruſhed; and theſe reſolutions had an evident tendency to ſo deſireable an object: They ſhould have," he ſaid, " his moſt cordial ſupport."

Mr Fox, who was then Secretary of State, notwithſtanding the motion was made by his rival, and ſupported by his adherents, who had been, in the courſe of the debate, exceedingly pointed againſt Adminiſtration; yet, ſenſible of the neceſſity of a reform in the repreſentation, he diſplayed his unrivalled abilities in ſupport of the reſolutions.

He ſaid, " That with others who had paid the tribute of eulogy to the ſpeech of the Right Honourable mover of the reſolutions, he muſt deſire to be counted one of the moſt concordant. But that, however, in the general, he approved of the principle on which theſe reſolutions were founded; yet in point of form, if he could have adviſed, poſſibly he would have wiſhed,

wiſhed, that they might have been ſomewhat different. Inſtead of offering ſpecific reſolutions to the Houſe, he would have been rather inclined to the buſineſs of going into a Committee, to digeſt it as they ſhould think moſt proper. However, taking the matter even as it was, in his thoughts, no ſolid objection had been raiſed againſt it. It was ſaid, the Conſtitution was, in its theory, already quite perfect; though, in its practice, it might appear otherwiſe. The contrary, paradoxical as it might ſeem, was what he would, nevertheleſs, maintain. It was, in his opinion, the moſt abſurd thing on earth in theory, though its practice was the moſt conſonant to ſound ſenſe. What, for inſtance, could be more abſurd than to ſay, that there ſhould be three independent and equipotent Eſtates—one of whom was the governor, and the other two the governed; and yet, that no act of legiſlation ſhould be voted, without the agreement of theſe three diſtinct and jarring powers? What could be more abſurd than to ſay, that one of theſe Eſtates ſhould conſiſt of a ſingle perſon, and that perſon the governor; and that this ſingle perſon's

voice

voice ſhould be of equal force with the millions he governed? Yet, abſurd as this theory was, nothing of the ſort appeared in the practice of the Conſtitution. By the benignity of the Prince, and by the wiſdom of his Counſellors, diſcordant as theſe principles looked on paper, there was yet in reality, and in the functions of Government, nothing of diſorder. People, therefore, ſhould not diſcredit theories as wild or chimerical, becauſe they concurred not immediately with their own ideas. Were it not for theoriſts, the Conſtitution, much as it was boaſted of, would have but little claim, at this time of day, to the praiſes beſtowed on it; were it not for the wiſe encouragement given to the theoriſts in all Governments that regard the bleſſings of liberty, it would ſoon expire. What ſhould we be now, but for our Harringtons, our Sydneys, and our Lockes? To invigorate the Conſtitution of Government frequently, is as requiſite, as to invigorate the body of every individual. We are every hour waſting, and every hour recruiting; ſo is the Conſtitution. To talk of innovations," ſaid Mr Fox, " as a bug-bear againſt improvement

and

and reformation, is what uncandid men have always done in politics, as well as religion. What are the forms regarding the trials of conteſted elections? What is the law diſqualifying cuſtom-houſe officers from voting? What is the bill which goes by the name of my honourable friend, Mr Burke? What are all theſe but ſo many innovations, as they are called, in the Conſtitution? Away with the canting phraſe. We are deſired to act as men—Let us do ſo. The ſingle conſideration then for us at this moment, is ſingly this,—Is any reform wanting, or is it not? I think it is; and, therefore, concur in the preſent motion."

Theſe invincible arguments ſerved only to form a decent debate, and afford an opportunity to the principal ſpeakers of diſplaying their abilities and attachment to the rights of the people; after which the motion was rejected by a majority of 144.

To ſtrengthen the arguments already adduced in ſupport of a reform in the repreſentation, and to ſhew that the neceſſity of a reform will always be greater as the influence of the Crown increaſes, I ſhall here inſert Mr Flood's

ſpeech, delivered in the Houſe of Commons, in the courſe of the laſt ſeſſion of Parliament, upon making a motion for leave to bring in a bill for amending the ſtate of the repreſentation.

Mr Flood ſaid, " That the light thrown upon this ſubject by Mr Fox and by Mr Pitt, was an encouragement to him to bring forward this buſineſs. Two men of ſuch extraordinary abilities, differing upon moſt other ſubjects, but both agreeing in this, could only be accounted for, by ſuppoſing it was founded in reaſon, and was the reſult of the cleareſt conviction. It was not ſurprizing, that the firſt attempt did not ſucceed: He had, however, no doubt, but that, by perſeverance, it would ſucceed at laſt."

He obſerved, " That that Houſe was not an adequate repreſentation of the people of this country. All juſt government was acknowledged to ariſe from the choice of the people: If the repreſentation of the people of England were perfect, he ſhould be of opinion that the Conſtitution was perfect. The mere calling the number of men *the repreſentation of the people*, did not make them ſo. What was it that made

made them ſo?—their being freely and voluntarily choſen by the people. Experience—lamentable experience—had taught all mankind this great truth,—that there was no man, nor body of men, that could be ſelected, or that had been ſelected, permanently to act for the people, that had not, at ſome moment or other, ſacrificed the intereſts of the people for their own. The liberty of the people was not ſafe, unleſs it was in their own cuſtody. This was the caſe when their Repreſentatives were freely choſen. There was a great body of men in this kingdom, not electors, as numerous, or perhaps more ſo, than thoſe who were. The property of this country was not now repreſented as it once was; and he thought it eſſentially neceſſary to introduce a new body of Conſtituents, as well as Repreſentatives.

" With regard to the preſent unfair and unequal ſtate of repreſentation, he conceived it was unneceſſary for him to enlarge upon it—he conceived it was a principle univerſally acknowledged, and incapable of being denied. No man could conceive that it was a ſecret, that the majority of that Houſe was elected by a

very few thouſand men—a few thouſand electors divided the rights of eight millions of men!"

He ſaid, "It was evident, that the inadequate ſtate of the repreſentation could be removed by one method—by admitting a number of new Members. That had been made private property, which ought to be the property of the Conſtitution; and the repreſentation ought to be commenſurate to the property of the kingdom. A number of new Conſtituents and Members were wanted. The addition of a hundred Members would not hurt this Houſe, if conſtitutionally choſen. The only objection to them, is, that part of the Houſe, which was now occupied by ſtrangers, muſt be filled with Members. The great body of reſident houſeholders all over the kingdom, who were able to ſupport their families, and to pay the taxes, had a right to be new conſtituents. Every father of a family, who paid his proportion of the public taxes, had this right."

He obſerved, "a number of boroughs had become the property of individuals in the Houſe of Lords, by which the balance of the Conſtitution

tion might be deſtroyed. Since the Revolution, no man could doubt, but that the influence of the Crown had greatly increaſed. Sir William Blackſtone, who wrote to all poſterity, in his Commentaries, after ſpeaking on this ſubject, concluded with obſerving, 'That the influence of the Crown had gained ground ſo faſt, as not only to compenſate for the loſs of every prerogative that had been taken away, but had gone ſo far beyond it, that liberty depended on the virtue of the Prince, rather than on the virtue of the Conſtitution.'

"A Right Hon. friend of his had formerly maintained, that the influence of the Crown was too great, and ought to be diminiſhed. It may be ſaid it had been diminiſhed; but it hath been increaſed by the influence derived from the Eaſt-Indies. No man could ſay, but that if the King and the Houſe of Lords could return a majority to the Houſe of Commons, the Conſtitution would be completely altered. All theſe abuſes ought to be corrected, or who would anſwer for the conſequences? The people never deſerved more of Government than at the preſent hour. No people ever deſerved

more

more from their Sovereign, becauſe they ſhewed the greateſt attachment to him:—an attachment which he deſerved."

This ſpeech, which contains many forcible arguments in favour of a reform in the repreſentation, was made upon the eve of a diſſolution of Parliament, and too late in the ſeſſion, to carry through a bill of this importance; the motion was accordingly rejected by a great majority. Beſides it is too evident, that economy, and reform in Parliamentary repreſentation, do not appear to be the ruling paſſion of any party when in power. Creating new Peerages with a view to ſecure or promote influence in Parliament; and eſtabliſhing, and conferring, ſine-cure places upon their friends and dependents, have been the ruling ſyſtem of every Adminiſtration, from the Revolution to the preſent day.

Whoever conſiders the preſent ſtate of our repreſentation muſt acknowledge, that it is not adequate to all its purpoſes, nor conſiſtent with its original principles. Is it not abſurd, for inſtance,

ſtance, that Corfe Caſtle*, or Old Sarum†, ſhould ſend as many members to Parliament as Briſtol‡? Is it not abſurd, that the Tower Hamlets ſhould have no repreſentatives, tho' they pay more taxes, by ſeveral thouſand pounds, than the county of Cornwall, which ſends forty-four members to the Houſe of Commons? Is it not abſurd, that eighty rotten boroughs, whoſe electors do not exceed one hundred perſons each, ſhould ſend no leſs than one hundred and ſixty members to the Commons; and that Weſtminſter, the ſeat of the Empire, and London, the Queen of commerce—the moſt opulent city in the world, and both containing a million of inhabitants, ſhould only ſend ſix repreſentatives to the Senate? Is it not abſurd, that the numerous and opulent freeholders of London have

* This town is ſituated in a barren ſoil between two hills, on one of which ſtands the caſtle. It contains only one church, and about one hundred houſes.

† Old Sarum is almoſt entirely depopulated. It once covered the ſummit of a high ſteep hill, and was ſtrongly fortified; but there is nothing now to be ſeen but the ruins of its walls.

‡ Briſtol is accounted the ſecond city in England, with regard to its magnitude, riches, and trade.

have not a ſingle vote in the return of members, and that, in a city containing about 400,000 people, the livery, who ſcarcely amount to 7000, ſhould have the ſole right of voting in elections? In ſhort, is it not abſurd, that a legiſlature, which acknowledges that all juſt and legal power is derived from the people, ſhould permit a few thouſand electors to divide the rights of ten millions of men* ?

Is it not a lamentable truth, that many of the boroughs ſell themſelves to the members; that the members ſell themſelves to the Miniſter, and whether right or wrong, for or againſt the intereſt

* *Preſent State of the Repreſentation.*

Boroughs whoſe electors do not exceed 100 perſons each			77	
Ditto not exceeding 200	—	—	27	
Cinque Ports	—	—	8	
			—	Members.
			112	224
Ditto above 200 voters	—	—	64	128
Cities and Univerſities	—	—	—	52
Counties	—	—	—	80
Five ſingle Boroughs	—	—	—	5
				489
Wales	—	—	—	24
Scotland	—	—	—	45
				558

intereſt of their Conſtituents, vote as they are deſired? Now, is it not repugnant to every idea of liberty; nay, is it not arbitrary in the higheſt degree, for any one man, whatever his rank may be, to make the ſervile Conſtituents of his boroughs vote according to his directions, on pain of utter ruin to themſelves and families?

In order therefore to render our repreſentation commenſurate to the property of the kingdom, which undoubtedly it ought to be, and to cut off every poſſible means, by which either a candidate may bribe, or a repreſentative be bribed, it will be abſolutely requiſite to disfranchiſe at leaſt ſixty of the decayed boroughs, and give to their electors the right of voting for the counties in which they are ſituated; to add one hundred and twenty members to the ſhires and the metropolis, and to the great and wealthy unrepreſented towns; to extend the right of voting to copyholders and ſtockholders in counties, and to all houſe-keepers in towns; and limit the duration of Parliament to the term of three years. By extending the right of voting, the Conſtituents would be ſo numerous as to render all attempts to bribe entirely abortive;

and if the duration of Parliament were no longer than three years, it would not be worth while for a repreſentative to purchaſe a ſeat in a houſe, when there was no proſpect of indemnifying himſelf before another diſſolution would take place.

I ſhall conclude this head with an obſervation of Lord Bolingbroke's, which is very appoſite to the ſubject.

"The beſt inſtituted Governments, ſays that noble author, like the beſt conſtituted animal bodies, carry in them the ſeeds of their deſtruction: and though they grow and improve for a time, they will ſoon tend viſibly to their diſſolution. Every hour they live is an hour the leſs that they have to live. All that can be done therefore to prolong the duration of a good Government, is to draw it back, on every favourable occaſion, to the firſt good principles on which it was founded. When theſe occaſions happen often, and are well improved, ſuch Governments are proſperous and durable. When they happen ſeldom, or are ill improved, theſe political bodies live in pain or in languor, and die ſoon."

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In order therefore to give ſtability to the Britiſh Empire, and to ſave it from political annihilation, the Conſtitution muſt be brought back to the principles on which it was originally founded.

The Civil Liſt, which hath been eſtabliſhed ſince the Revolution, and all the augmentations that have been made to it, may be juſtly conſidered as auxiliaries to the Septennial Act.

The revenue of the Crown, at the acceſſion of King William, amounted to little more than two millions, without any tax on land, or malt, and a multitude of other grievous impoſitions, that have been ſince heaped on the nation. This revenue, beſides ſupporting the honour and dignity of the Crown, defrayed all the other expences of the State. When theſe expences grew, upon extraordinary occaſions, too great for the revenue of the Crown to bear, the people aided the Crown, if they approved the occaſions of the expence.

But as the revenues in former reigns had been often embezzled and miſapplied, a private revenue, or a civil liſt, as it is commonly called,

was aſſigned to King William*, for the ſupport of his houſe and dignity; and the reſt of the public money was to be employed, under the inſpection of Parliament, for the current national ſervice of the year. From that time, our Kings, inſtead of contributing moſt, have contributed nothing to the public charge; and the people of Great-Britain, inſtead of giving occaſional aids to the Crown, have taken upon themſelves the whole load of ordinary and extraordinary expences, for which they annually provide. Notwithſtanding this alteration in the ſtate of the revenue, and the intereſt of the King and the people, in the management of it, the ſame forms of granting aids to the Crown, and of levying taxes, and of managing the public treaſure, have been continued; ſo that the people ſtand obliged (for the Crown, that is truſted with the whole, is bound for nothing) to make good all deficiencies, though they have no ſhare in the management of the revenue.

Owing

* The Civil Liſt ſettled on King William amounted to 600,000l. a-year, chargeable with the appointments of the Queen Dowager, the Prince and Princeſs of Denmark, the Judges, &c. &c. &c.

Owing to this vaſt alteration in the ſtate of the revenue, and to that ſyſtem of corruption which was eſtabliſhed in the reign of King William, "The Patriots at that time began to perceive that the means of exerciſing the undue influence of the Crown in elections was increaſed, and every day increaſing. They began to aſſert, that the foundations were laid of giving as great power to the Crown indirectly, as the prerogative, which they had formerly dreaded ſo much, could give directly, and of eſtabliſhing univerſal corruption*."

But to go back to the reign of King Charles the Second, whoſe revenue was computed at no more than one million two hundred thouſand pounds a year, the patriots of that age took great alarm at the pecuniary influence it might create, and ſpoke of it as a fund for corruption. Now, if this revenue could afford a fund for corruption, when, beſides maintaining the honour and dignity of the Crown, it was to defray all the other expences of the State, and among the reſt, thoſe of a ſmall army, and a

* See a Diſſertation upon Parties.—A performance which does credit to the head and the heart of the author.

great

great fleet; what would the ſame patriots think of a revenue of a million a year, applicable to the particular expences of the Crown alone, and not one farthing of which hath ever been diverted to any national uſe? They would have the ſame juſt confidence, no doubt, as we have, in his preſent Majeſty; but they would ſay, as we do, that ſo immenſe a private revenue may become hereafter an inexhauſtible fund of corruption; and therefore, that the independency of Parliament is, and muſt be, in real danger, till ſome remedies, as effectual againſt the pecuniary influence, as have been found againſt the prerogative of the Crown, be provided.

Notwithſtanding this immenſe revenue of a million a year for the ſupport of the dignity of the Crown, the Miniſtry have frequently applied to the Commons for three or four hundred thouſand pounds, nay, ſometimes for half a million, to diſcharge the debts of the Crown. A part of theſe debts, it is ſaid, and generally believed, hath been contracted by influencing elections, and by gifts and penſions to the adherents of the Miniſtry. Theſe, therefore, may

be

be conſidered as ſo many auxiliaries of corruption, belonging to the eſtabliſhment of the Civil Liſt.

The increaſe of the public revenue, and the accumulation of the national debt, are very formidable auxiliaries to the Septennial Act; as they have given a power, unknown before the Revolution, to one of the three branches of the legiſlature; and as public liberty is not guarded againſt the dangers that may ariſe from this power, as it is againſt the dangers that uſed to ariſe from the prerogatives formerly poſſeſſed, or claimed, by the Crown.

The reader has been told, that, at the Revolution, the annual revenue of the Crown amounted to about two millions: The public debts, at that period, did not exceed that ſum. It is aſſerted by ſeveral writers, that that revenue might have been ſo increaſed, as to anſwer yearly the great annual expences, in which we were involved ſoon afterwards. But King William's Miniſtry, inſtead of adopting a method ſo practicable and eligible, fell upon that bold and pernicious expedient of borrowing

money

money on parliamentary ſecurities *, which forms what is now called the Public Funds, and hath been productive of innumerable evils to this kingdom.

Having once begun to borrow at high intereſt, to anticipate and mortgage, we have proceeded through the courſe of a century, con-

* Charles Montague, afterwards Lord Halifax, was ſaid to be the projector of this ſcheme. His chief argument for ſuch a project was, that it would attach the monied part of the nation to the new eſtabliſhment; becauſe, after lending their money, they would have no hopes of being repaid, but by ſupporting that eſtabliſhment; and that the weight of taxes would oblige the commercial people to be more induſtrious.

It was in the war which began at the Revolution, and was concluded by the Treaty of Ryſwick in 1697, that the foundation of the preſent enormous debt of Great-Britain was firſt laid.——"On the laſt day of that year," according to Dr Smith, "the public debts, funded and unfunded, amounted to 21,515,742l." The ſame author very juſtly remarks, "That, were the expence of war to be defrayed always by a revenue raiſed within the year, the taxes from which that extraordinary revenue was drawn would laſt no longer than the war. Wars would in general be more ſpeedily concluded, and leſs wantonly undertaken. The people feeling, during the continuance of the war, the compleat burden of it, would ſoon grow weary of it; and Government, in order to humour them, would be under the neceſſity of carrying it on no longer than it was neceſſary to do ſo: And the foreſight of the heavy and unavoidable burdens of war would hinder the people from wantonly calling for it when there was no real nor ſolid intereſt to fight for."

tracting

tracting new debts; laying on new taxes; creating new funds; engaging in every continental quarrel, however remote from our intereſt; paying immenſe ſubſidies to almoſt all the petty, as well as all the powerful Princes in Europe, for fighting their own battles; and extending our conqueſts and depredations through every part of the world, until we have increaſed the public revenue to fourteen millions a year, and accumulated the national debt to the enormous ſum of two hundred and fifty millions!

Now it is evident, that, as we have annually increaſed our debts and our taxes, we have annually increaſed the power and influence of the Crown, or rather the power and influence of the Miniſtry; and theſe debts, funds, and taxes, being eſtabliſhed for perpetuity, this increaſe of power muſt not only continue, but ſtill increaſe, as long as this ſyſtem of *economy* ſubſiſts.

The eſtabliſhment of our funds has neceſſarily hatched a brood of uſurers, brokers, contractors, and ſtock-jobbers, to prey upon the vitals of their country, and to augment the influence of the Crown; and by the increaſe of

our taxes, a vaſt number of officers, appointed and paid by the Treaſury, have been created in every part of the kingdom, and conſequently increaſed the power of the Miniſtry. And notwithſtanding the many acts that have been made to prevent an undue influence on the elected, as well as on the electors; yet long Parliaments, the partial ſtate of the repreſentation, the eſtabliſhment of the Civil Liſt, the increaſe of the public revenue, of debts, and taxes, have increaſed the power of the Miniſtry, to an alarming degree; ~~in the ſcale of our Government;~~ a power that, as it is more real, and more covered and ſilent, than thoſe prerogatives formerly poſſeſſed by the Crown, may prove much more dangerous to the Conſtitution.

The nature of prerogative, formerly ſo dangerous to our liberties, is now ſo well underſtood, and ſo ſecurely reſtrained, that it can no longer be uſed for the ſame oppreſſive purpoſes; but vice and luxury, the conſtant attendants of wealth, having prepared the minds of the people for ſlavery and corruption, our Miniſtry, being always in poſſeſſion of the

means

means—the whole of the public treaſure,—have frequently availed themſelves of theſe advantages, and, in a great meaſure, ſupported their government by corruption. Corruption has been juſtly conſidered as the greateſt curſe that can befal a nation, and hath been one principal cauſe of the declenſion and fall of every State in the ancient world.

The Britiſh Conſtitution has nothing now to fear, either from the Pope, the Pretender, or that Devil—Prerogative.—-Corruption is the only enemy that will, ſooner or later, undermine that noble fabric, which was the work of many centuries, the effect of much wiſdom, and the price of much blood—that fabric, I ſay, which was able to reſiſt the united efforts of ſo many races of *giants*, will be at laſt demoliſhed by a race of *pygmies*—a gang of avaricious, venal, corrupt, cowardly, and rapacious wretches.

Since the Revolution, the augmentation of the navy and army has become a very potent auxiliary to the Septennial Bill.

Since that period, the power and influence of the Miniſtry, ariſing from the augmentation

of our naval and military forces, have increaſed above fourfold; and this power muſt continue to increaſe in proportion to their augmentation.

Our naval and military eſtabliſhments have afforded appointments to above ſeven thouſand commiſſion officers, beſides a vaſt number of warrant and non-commiſſion officers, all looking for promotion, places, penſions, and honours; and the majority of this great body of men, together with many of their friends, are entirely devoted to Adminiſtration.

Theſe eſtabliſhments have likewiſe created an army of contractors, agents, bankers, and brokers, all ſubmiſſive and tractable, and wholly dependent on Government.

The augmentation of the army hath not only extended the influence of the Miniſtry, but enlarged a devouring and conſtantly increaſing expence, that of the military peace-eſtabliſhment, as the number of our ſoldiers is almoſt double to that of our ſeamen.

It has been obſerved by many noblemen and gentlemen, diſtinguiſhed by their abilities and attachment to their country, that our military peace-eſtabliſhment has been, for many years paſt,

paſt, too great, and that our marine eſtabliſhment has been too ſmall.

At the concluſion of the laſt war, the navy, which amounted to above four hundred ſail*, was reduced to twenty ſhips of the line, and about ſixty-five frigates and ſloops; whilſt the army, which conſiſted of two troops of horſe-guards, three troops of grenadier-guards, one regiment of horſe-guards, four regiments of horſe, three regiments of dragoon-guards, nineteen regiments of dragoons, three regiments of foot-guards, one hundred and ſix regiments of foot, one royal regiment of artillery conſiſting of four battalions, and a number of independent companies of invalids, ſuffered a very ſmall diminution of its numbers,—only thirty regiments of foot being reduced.

It has been aſſerted in Parliament, by naval officers, diſtinguiſhed by their profeſſional abilities and independence, that we had too few line of battle ſhips, and too many ſmall ſhips; and that the loſs of America was, in a great meaſure, owing to the want of a ſufficient number

* The line of battle amounted to about 150 ſail.

ber of ſhips of the line. It would therefore be prudent to augment the number of our line of battle ſhips—the bulwarks of the Empire—and reduce the number of our ſmaller veſſels; and to increaſe the peace eſtabliſhment of the navy, and reduce that of the army.

Though economy in every department of the State is abſolutely neceſſary, yet parſimony in that of the marine muſt inevitably ruin us. During the late war, Great-Britain had not a friendly power in the naval world, every State beheld her with an eye of jealouſy. She was attacked on all ſides, by her old allies, as well as by her old and natural enemies. The Dutch, whom we raiſed from the tenants of mud-walled villages, to the rank of the high and mighty States, united themſelves to the Houſe of Bourbon, and became our rivals in arms, as well as in commerce.

The United States of America, at preſent in their infancy, muſt ſoon become a very formidable power. The ſituation of North America, whoſe eaſtern ſhores are waſhed by the great Atlantic Ocean, enables her to carry on a direct commerce with Europe, Africa, and India; her various

various climates, ſoils and productions, her fiſheries, her great navigable rivers, and the form of her Government, fit her for trade and commerce; and muſt ſooner or later raiſe her to be one of the greateſt and moſt formidable Empires that ever was in the world. Be this as it may, the time, in all probability, is not far diſtant, when the States of America, joined by the maritime powers of Europe, particularly thoſe of France and Spain, will exert their united ſtrength, to expel us not only from the American Continent, but from our Weſt-India iſlands, thoſe ſources of our wealth and power.

France, though formerly lying under great diſadvantages in trade and commerce by the nature of her Government, was the moſt powerful kingdom on the European Continent. Her advantages in ſituation are as great as ours; and thoſe of her climate, her ſoil, and the number of her inhabitants (twenty-five millions) are ſuperior to ours, and indeed to thoſe of any European nation. Theſe advantages, and the eſtabliſhment of her Government upon the principles of liberty, muſt render France the

ſeat

ſeat of induſtry, wealth, and power, and conſequently the firſt maritime kingdom in Europe.

At preſent, ſhe talks of peace and good-will to all the world: the reaſon is obvious—her Conſtitution is not as yet firmly eſtabliſhed, and the ambition of her Sovereigns having beggared her people, the State is reduced to the very verge of bankruptcy*. But it may naturally be expected, that the time is ſpeedily approaching when ſhe will hold a different language, and be prepared to join in any confederacy for curbing the power, and humbling the pride of Britain.

Spain is reſtoring her finances, extending her commerce, re-eſtabliſhing her marine, renewing her alliance with France, ſounding the diſpoſitions of the Court of Ruſſia, and the States of America, and, rather than make any humiliating conceſſions, preparing to ſupport her claims by force of arms; but whatever may be the iſſue of the preſent hoſtile appearances, it is very evident,

* Since the above was written, the Family Compact has been recognized between France and Spain; and the National Aſſembly of France are preparing a very formidable fleet for the aſſiſtance of Spain, ſhould a war be the iſſue of the preſent negociations.

evident, that the Court of Spain will continue to move heaven and earth in order to form a league againſt Old England, for the recovery of the barren rock of Gibraltar, and the invavaluable iſland of Jamaica.

It will therefore be proper, in my opinion, but with great deference to the judgment of others, to fortify our Weſt-India iſlands; to augment the number of our line of battle ſhips; and form alliances with the Northern maritime powers (Sweden and Denmark); but never to neter into any treaty, offenſive and defenſive, (I ſpeak not of *commercial ones*) with our powerful rivals, the two Imperial Courts, the Houſe of Bourbon, and the American States. Our treaties in general have been more advantageous to our allies than to ourſelves; it would therefore be bad policy to increaſe the power of our enemies by forming alliances with them.

Sweden and Denmark, owing to their poverty, and barren countries, can never be our rivals; but a million of Engliſh money laid out upon their marine, provided it was indiſpenſibly neceſſary, would render them very conſiderable allies, particularly Sweden, whoſe heroic Sove-

reign is very juſtly, at this moment, the admiration of all Europe.

Portugal, whoſe alliance has already coſt this nation ſeveral millions, has long ago loſt her importance in the political ſcale of Europe. Both her Court and her troops have more than once behaved with ingratitude and treachery to Britain, while fighting her battles. And as we have loſt almoſt the whole of that great balance of trade, which was formerly ſaid to be in our favour, and for which we protected her, an alliance with ſo weak a power, ſituated on the Continent, and almoſt ſurrounded by Spain, muſt undoubtedly be a burden to us.

Our late treaty with the Dutch is certainly judicious, and the Miniſtry have great merit in detaching them from the intereſt of France. It is to be hoped, that the States, who ſometimes have, notwithſtanding their treaties, ſtood aloof in the day of our trouble, will ſtrictly adhere to their engagements, and aſſiſt us with vigour in the hour of danger. Our powers, at leaſt, equal to that of the whole Houſe of Bourbon; and when ſupported by Holland, Britain will always

always be a match for all her European naval enemies.

The league between England and Pruſſia was formed for the mutual defence of their German dominions, and for curbing the power of Auſtria and Ruſſia, Pruſſia's formidable rivals. Our alliance with that Monarch has enabled him to dictate peace between Auſtria and the Porte; but, it is to be feared, it has rendered the two Imperial Courts our implacable and dangerous enemies in Germany.

It is ſaid that, in conſequence of this league, a general confederacy againſt the growing and united power of Great-Britain and Pruſſia, the firſt the moſt formidable at ſea, the ſecond the moſt powerful, in the preſent moment, at land, has been formed among the Ruſſians, Auſtrians, Venetians, the French and Spaniards, the Kings of Portugal, Naples, and Sardinia. But, be this as it will, ſhould theſe formidable and ambitious powers, either at the preſent, or at a future period, form a confederacy for diſturbing the tranquillity of Europe, and extending their dominions at the expence of Britain, or her allies, it is preſumed, that the Grand Signior, the

King of Poland, and the Proteſtant Princes and States of Germany, under the auſpices of the King of Pruſſia, and ſupported by Great-Britain, and her maritime allies,—the Kings of Sweden and Denmark, and the States-General,—would form a league ſufficiently powerful to check the ambition of their adverſaries. And as the danger will be common, it is but reaſonable that the expence ſhould be proportioned to the abilities of each of the allied powers; and that each ſhould not only furniſh, but likewiſe ſubſiſt their ſtipulated quotas of troops.

Such a confederacy will undoubtedly be neceſſary, as we have not only expended our treaſure, and waſted our ſtrength, by extending our dominions and commerce, but given umbrage to all our rivals, and will, in all probability, ſoon have to contend with the American States, as well as with our European enemies, for the defence of our Weſtern Colonies, and even for the preſervation of the iſland of Great-Britain itſelf,—that Queen of iſles, and Miſtreſs of the ſea and of commerce. Happy Britons, who never can be attacked but by a power ſuperior at ſea!

In

In order therefore to maintain our naval ſuperiority, and put a ſtop to the practice of impreſſing ſeamen to ſerve on board the royal navy, a practice repugnant to juſtice, and to every principle of the Britiſh Conſtitution, and to grant an equal participation of the benefit of the laws and the Conſtitution to men, who are the principal ſupporters of their country, it will be requiſite to augment the ſeamen's pay, and make it at leaſt equal to that in the merchant-ſervice in time of peace; and to limit the duration of their ſervitude to the term of ſeven years, or during the continuance of the war. If this plan were adopted, the thoughts of leaving their wives and families in comfortable ſituations, the hopes of acquiring prize-money, and the certainty of obtaining their liberty at the expiration of the limited time, would induce the ſeamen to enter with chearfulneſs into the ſervice, and inſpire them with courage, and a ſincere attachment to their country.

With regard to our land forces, it muſt be evident, that perpetual ſervitude, and a pitiful ſubſiſtence, hardly ſufficient to keep ſoul and body together, are very great bars to the recruiting

cruiting ſervice. If the foot ſoldiers were allowed eight-pence a-day, free of all deductions, and enliſted for a term of years, at the expiration of which they might claim their diſcharge, volunteers would offer themſelves from all parts of the kingdom, even from the deſire of learning the uſe and exerciſe of arms, the ambition of being concerned in ſcenes of actual ſervice, and the chagrin of little diſappointments and temporary diſguſts, which would not have impelled them to liſt as ſoldiers on the common terms of perpetual ſlavery. In conſequence of ſuch a ſucceſſion, the whole of the kingdom would ſoon be ſtocked with members of a diſciplined militia, equal to any army of profeſſed ſoldiers. As our political exiſtence depends upon the number and bravery of our ſeamen, ſupported by our military virtue and public ſpirit, the neceſſity of adopting plans ſomething ſimilar to theſe muſt be very apparent.

The reader will, I hope, pardon me for making this ſhort digreſſion: I ſhall now return to my ſubject, and ſhew the vaſt acceſſion of power and influence which the Miniſtry have acquired by the Eaſt-India Bill.

It

It muſt be acknowledged by every candid and unprejudiced mind, that the Bill for the better regulation of the Eaſt-India Company's affairs, with all its explanatory and ſupplemental acts, hath given an immenſe weight of influence to Government; and, conſequently, is a moſt powerful auxiliary to Septennial Parliaments.

This Bill has placed all matters relating to the civil and military government, and the revenues of the Company, in the hands of Commiſſioners, under the direction and controul of the Miniſtry. Before the year 1773, the patronage of India was veſted in the Company; but, by this Bill, the whole of that immenſe patronage is given to the Miniſtry, and not to the Crown. It is well known, that the Crown had always ſome influence in the Court of Directors, and that it was greatly increaſed by the Regulating Bill paſſed in the year 1773. Before that period, the Company, without doubt, exerciſed many rights incompatible with the principles of a commercial limited Company, and derogatory to the honour of the Sovereign. But Mr Pitt's Regulating Bill has eſtabliſhed

bliſhed a Board of Controul, a fourth Eſtate, or department of Government, with powers infinitely exceeding thoſe formerly poſſeſſed by the Company. "This Board may tranſact matters of any ſort with the country powers; may treat with, or ally with, or declare war againſt, or make war with, all or any of the powers and Princes of India; may levy armies there to any extent, and command the whole revenues of all our poſſeſſions for their ſupport, without taking his Majeſty's pleaſure upon any of theſe ſubjects in any ſhape, and without acting in his name, or under his authority: And theſe things they may do againſt the will of the Directors, and without the knowledge of Parliament *." Thus the Board of Controul have ſeparated, and uſurped a part of the executive power, which, according to the principles of our Conſtitution, ought ever to remain undivided. The prerogatives of the Crown may be abridged, and ſome of them perhaps totally taken away; but they cannot be divided.

* See Mr Sheridan's comparative Statement of the two Bills for the better Management of the Britiſh Poſſeſſions in India.

This

This Bill, by veſting the immenſe patronage of India, with ſuch extraordinary powers, in the hands of the Miniſtry, has added ſuch an immenſe increaſe of influence to their already overgrown power, as may, ſooner or later, cruſh the Conſtitution under its enormous weight. But whatever be in this, it is very evident, that, while this Bill and the Septennial Act ſtand unrepealed, and while the preſent partial ſtate of our repreſentation continues, both the Sovereign and the people will be governed by the abſolute will of one man—the Chief of the predominant party.

Thus have I attempted to explain the principles of the Britiſh Conſtitution, and to revive in the minds of men the true ſpirit of it.

I have ſhewn, that the annual elective power of the people was the firſt principle of our Government; and that annual Parliaments were the baſis of the Conſtitution, and the greateſt bulwarks of the rights and liberties of the people.

I have likewiſe ſhewn, that, as Parliaments, after the acceſſion of William the Third, exiſt-

ed entirely at the will of the Crown, the patriots of that age had great merit in obtaining the Triennial Act—an Act that ſtripped the Crown of an uſurped prerogative, which had been productive of the greateſt evils to the nation; and that the Septennial Act, that bane of our State, was entailed upon us by a faction that ſacrificed the original principles of the Conſtitution to their own intereſt and ambition—an Act that has deprived the people of the only remedy they had againſt thoſe who, through ignorance or corruption, betrayed the truſt repoſed in them—an Act that has increaſed the expence of elections, and encouraged every practice of corruption—an Act that has given exiſtence to ſeveral laws repugnant to liberty and to the principles of the Conſtitution—and an Act that, ſtrengthened by ſo many powerful auxiliaries, has not only deſtroyed the balance of our Government, but may, in ſome future age, enable a wicked and ambitious Miniſtry to ſubvert the laws, and enſlave the people.

I have made it appear, that the baſis of our repreſentation in Parliament was founded upon popula-

population, and the contributions which each individual paid to the State; and have endeavoured to ſet, in a clear light, the preſent abſurd and unequal ſtate of the repreſentation, and the abſolute neceſſity of a reform.

I have endeavoured to ſhew in what manner, and to what a prodigious extent, the power of the Crown hath increaſed ſince the Revolution; and that it has deſtroyed that equilibrium of our Government, which always ought to continue ſuſpended in its true equipoiſe; and conſequently, that public liberty can never be ſecure, when the will of one branch of the legiſlature can direct the conduct of all the three.

In fine, ~~to explain the principles of the Conſtitution,~~ to inſpire the people of Great-Britain with the love of liberty and their country, and to excite them to uſe every conſtitutional mean in their power to obtain an equal repreſentation in Parliament, and a repeal of the Septennial and the Eaſt-India Bills, have been the ſole deſign of this work. The deſign may have been inſufficiently executed; but it is laudable —it is of the laſt importance; and whatever the enemies of our Conſtitution, the weak, the

Principles of our government.

ignorant, and trifling part of mankind, may ſay, the importance of it will be felt every year more and more, till it be felt by every man in Britain.

In order therefore to obtain a reform in the repreſentation, and the repeal of the Septennial Act, which would diminiſh the over-grown power of the Crown, and ſecure the independence of Parliament, a coalition of parties will be abſolutely neceſſary. A coalition of the Whig and Tory parties, by defeating the efforts of prerogative, ſaved this nation at the Revolution; and it is earneſtly to be wiſhed, that a coalition of the rival parties of the preſent day may ſave it from the effects of corruption.

That the preſent Adminiſtration are compoſed of men of ſound ſenſe, of profeſſional ſkill, and of integrity and honour, will moſt readily be admitted; and that his Royal Highneſs the Prince of Wales's party are diſtinguiſhed by their rank, their property, their great abilities, their integrity and independence, muſt be acknowledged by every candid and unprejudiced mind. Let theſe parties then, ſo juſtly diſtinguiſhed by their great talents, be blended

together

together for the public good. Let their principal leaders lay aſide all party diſtinctions and prejudices, and unite their heads and hearts for the ſafety and glory of the empire.

"Let them recollect," as Mr Beaufoy ſaid, "that it is not the influence of a favourite, or the councils of a Prince, that are now to be ſuppreſſed; for theſe could be prevented by the purity of Parliament. The thirſt of arbitrary power might deſign to enſlave a free nation; but a virtuous Houſe of Commons would ſoon detect their purpoſe, however carefully diſguiſed; and, by its conſtitutional perſeverance, entirely defeat all their projects. The influence of a Miniſter, in the great councils of a nation, is what they are to oppoſe: It is an influence of the moſt dangerous conſequence: The object of it is the corruption of the guardians of our liberty."—Let them then cruſh this many-headed monſter, and reſtore to us thoſe advantages of our Conſtitution which our forefathers enjoyed in its original ſtate of purity.

But whatever Miniſters may govern, whatever parties may ariſe, whilſt almoſt all the nations